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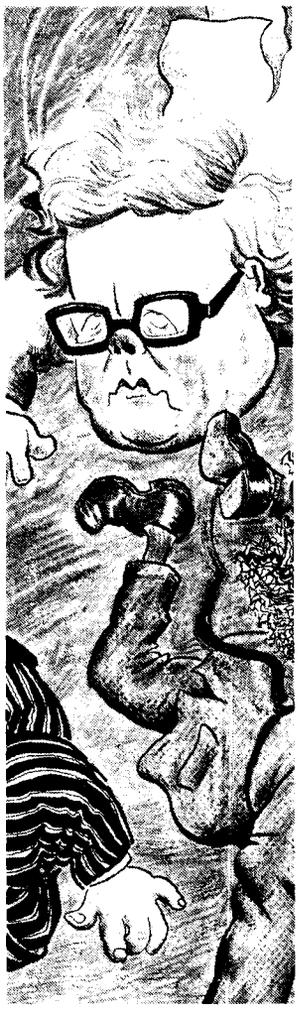
New Statesman



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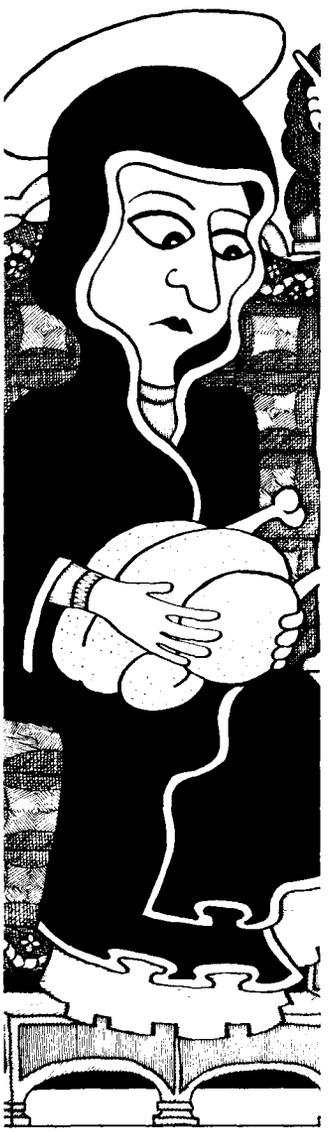

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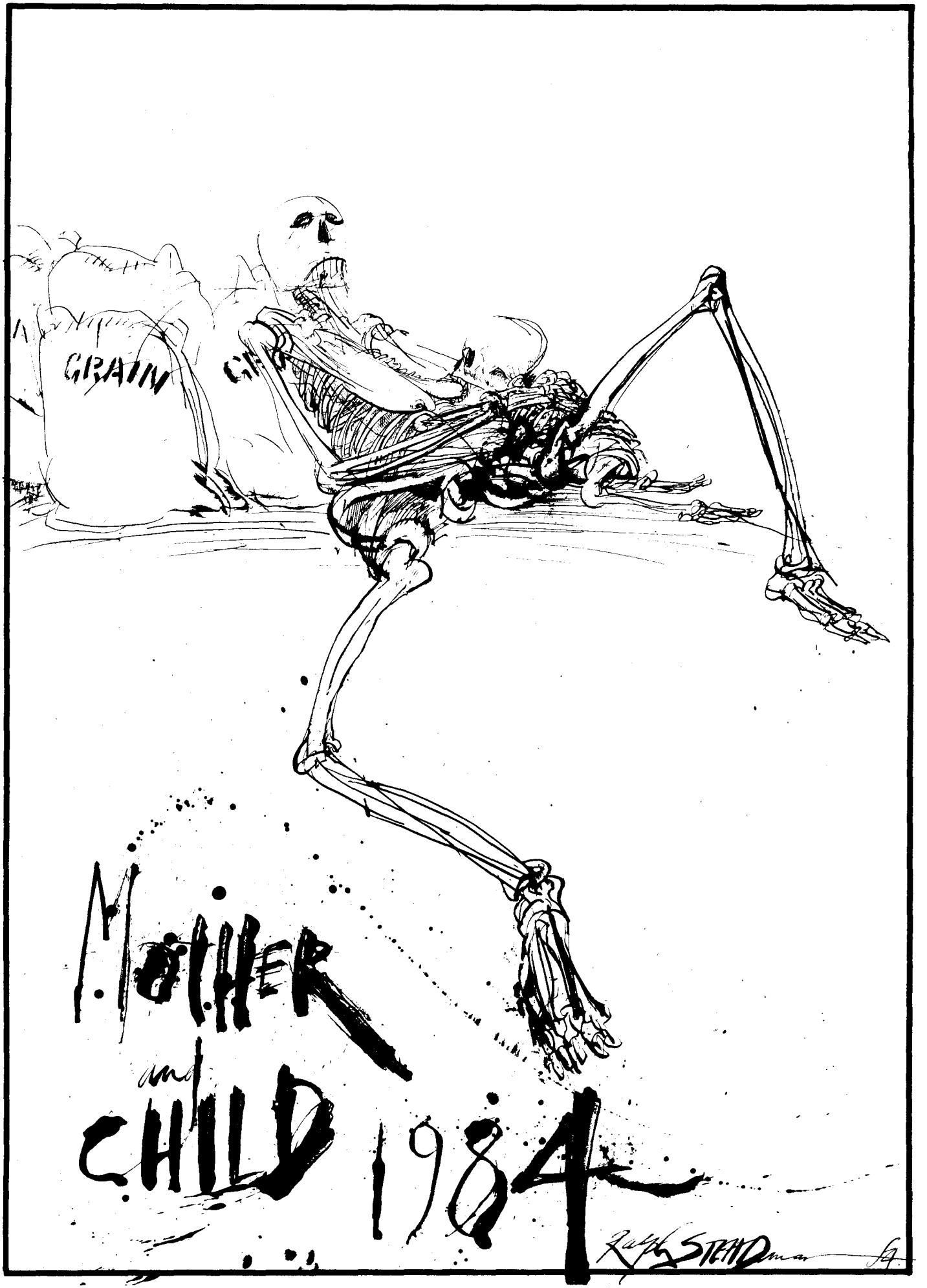

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New Statesman Vol 108 No 2805/2806 21/28 December 1984

Nineteen eighty-four

Young people ought not to be idle. It is very bad for them. It starts them off wrong.

Mrs Thatcher, 17 December

IT WILL GO DOWN in British political history as the year of the miners' strike. In the short term it will go down as the year in which the recovery of the Labour Party's electoral prospects faltered. At a less parochial level, it will go down as the year when President Reagan began to talk disarmament and detente — and Mrs Thatcher, dutifully tagging along in his wake, decided to drop the Iron Maiden image and within a week spent hours hobnobbing with Comrade Gorbachev at Chequers and days getting rid of British sovereignty over Hong Kong in Peking.

Only political cynics of the far Right and the far Left can disagree with the conclusion that the government-inspired provocation that led to this strike and the events since have been a *national* disaster. The government's aim has with hindsight been clear since 1979 — to avenge previous Tory government reverses at the hands of the National Union of Mineworkers by hiring Ian MacGregor to mount a blitzkrieg against Arthur Scargill and the national executive of the NUM. Whatever happens in the end, that tactic has failed at catastrophic national expense.

It has failed not just in material terms, though the financial sums involved are stupendous. By the time that some settlement or other is negotiated in the course of 1985 the miners' dispute will have cost the taxpayer even more than the Falklands War. Whatever Mr Ian MacGregor's successors are able to achieve by way of cost reductions with their management and the NUM after the strike is over, the 1984 dispute will continue to be a financial burden on the British taxpayer until way into the next century. In terms of economic and financial objectives, the miners' strike has thus been a great disaster for the government. If such a strategy had gone so disastrously wrong at such an unpredicted cost in any normal commercial enterprise, the management would be removed by the shareholders.

But the moral bankruptcy of the government's position in the dispute is even more important. In the years since 1979 no one has effectively stood up against the elected dictatorship that Thatcherism has increasingly come to represent. There have been regular 'revolts' within the parliamentary Tory party over the years, but they have been theatre not reality. The civil service, which at first reacted with at least disbelieving defensiveness to Thatcherism, has long since thrown in the towel and just does what it is told to do. And, it has to be said, none of the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary opposition to the Thatcherite bulldozer has got a sustained act together.

For the first time since 1979, mining communities have demonstrated, with the slenderist of resources, a *moral* opposition to that bulldozer. Forget in this context the politically motivated opposition of the leadership of the NUM. As we have reported in this and previous issues, the way in which the government has conducted this dispute has produced a spontaneous and sustained uprising of resistence by whole communities throughout the mining areas of the country. The response to appeals for financial contributions for the wives and families of striking miners (even from those who have instinctively disliked the political style and tactics of Arthur Scargill and the majority on the NUM national executive) is concrete proof of the extent of support for the miners' reactive stand against the assault of mindless Thatcherism. The cost to the government and the NCB of achieving any of their goals will have been *totally* out of proportion.

Whatever the outcome, miners and mining communities will have written a lasting and heroic chapter in the history of British trade union history. As Denis MacShane reports on page 18, the strategy of the government and the behaviour of the authorities as reflected in the foreign media have for ever tarnished this country's reputation as a tolerant, democratic society.

Police politics

The most specific issue to emerge from this long dispute is over the future of policing. The determination of the Tory government to be seen to be taking on 'the enemy within' — itself a phrase which significantly indicated Mrs Thatcher's view that she was fighting a political civil war against the miners, rather than directing an industrial dispute in a nationalised industry — has combined with the professional determination of chief constables to outwit the NUM. The result of this combination has been completely to discredit the theory of police accountability in this country — a theory which in any case had become increasingly threadbare.

The fact of the matter is that the centralised reporting and police resource allocation procedures, centred on Scotland Yard, have created a 'national' police capacity. For most of 1984, local police authorities have had no say in the policing priorities of the forces for which in name they are politically responsible. For some time now, the taxpayer has also been paying for police costs that normally would fall on the rates.

Harassed chief constables think that they are not jumping to the orders of the Thatcher government, that they are not answerable to the Home Secretary of the day. In so asserting they are making the whole of the case for an urgent review of the politics of policing. In reality, the present position of the politics of policing is that chief constables are indeed in practice responsible to no one.

They are not removable by their nominal political masters, except for the most blatant personal misconduct or incompetence. There is, in short, no real political accountability for their policing priorities, or prejudices. During the miners's strike there happens to have been an identity of attitude between the government and the overwhelming majority of chief constables, which has resulted in a kind of regulation and guidance of local police forces by nod, wink and speech from the Home Secretary. But 1984 has brought out into the open the submerged fact that, over the past decade and more, there has been an increasing divorce between the *theory* of local and accountable policing in this country and its increasingly centralised and unaccountable practice.

There are two possible models for the future development of British policing. One would accept that technology and other social developments require increased centralisation and would make policing an explicit responsibility of a 'Minister of the Interior'. The other would restore proper local political control of the police. Royal Commissions are usually an excuse for inaction, but the miners' strike has demonstrated the real need for a Royal Commission to crystalise thinking out of the present chaos of policing in this country. □

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NEW SPY STATION TO LOOK INSIDE USSR

A GIANT NEW AMERICAN radar surveillance station which may make a major impact on East-West relations is planned for construction in eastern England, according to defence reseearch information passed to the *New Statesman*. DUNCAN CAMPBELL reports

CURRENTLY codenamed 'Cold Witness', the new radar will enable the United States to monitor military movements over a wide area of the North Atlantic, Norwegian and Barents Seas, and around such key Soviet centres as the Kola peninsula, adjacent to Norway.

A formal Defence Ministry statement on the project will be made this week by Minister of State for Defence Procurement, Adam Butler, according to the MoD. The secret new radar project — likely to cost over £100 million — is politically and technically very sensitive for several reasons:

- The long range surveillance of Soviet ports, military installations, and naval movements is intended to facilitate, among other developments, targeting of ground and sea launched cruise missiles. A Soviet counter-threat to such an offensive development is certain.
- The most likely site to be selected for the new radar — Orford Ness in Suffolk — is environmentally particularly sensitive. The radar will mean heavy construction traffic in a remote and attractive area, the disruption of a nature reserve. Local feelings have already been stirred up during the continuing enquiry at Snape into the proposed Sizewell PWR nuclear reactor, to be sited nearby.
- Experimental research for the new US radar has been carried out by civilian British scientists, who are ostensibly prohibited from undertaking secret military research.

Although details of the planned station are very highly classified, many aspects of its radar technique are evident from published details about a similar experimental installation which has been operating for over two years at Cricklade, near Swindon in Wiltshire.

Public information about this Cold Witness experimental site indicates that the new station is likely to remote monitor military movements over more than 5 million square kilometres of ocean and land area (*see diagram*). Such long range surveillance is achieved by a novel radar technique, called 'Over the Horizon' (OTH) radar, whose maximum range is about 3000 km. The Cricklade installation can surveil the North Atlantic almost as far as Newfoundland. The full-scale installation would be able to 'see' far beyond the North Cape of Norway.

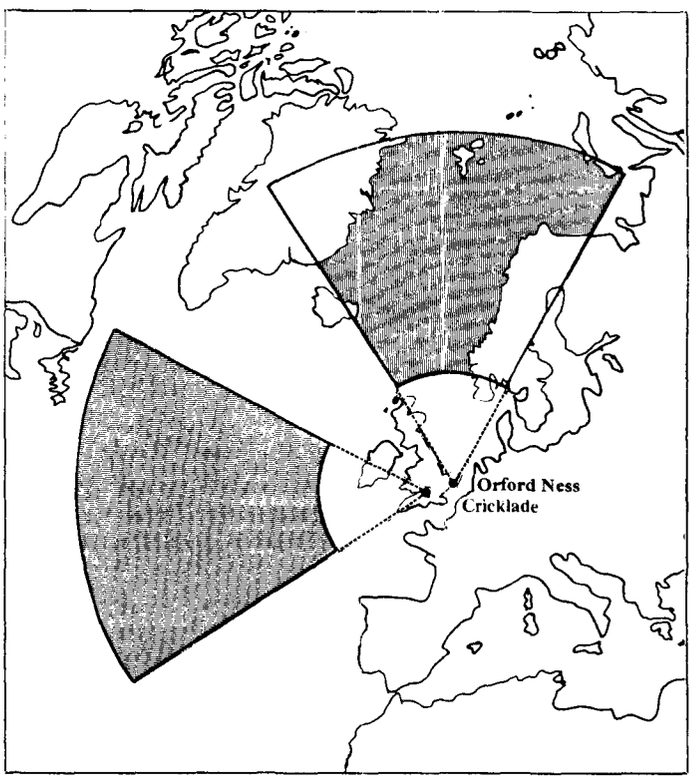
The Cricklade radar site is owned by GCHQ Cheltenham, which previously sited the site for communications intelligence research. GCHQ's OTH radar at Cricklade was, however, refurbished six years ago by staff of the Science and Engineering Research Council (SERC), for experiments in monitoring ocean weather conditions in the North Atlantic. Then, about three years ago, SERC accepted US government funds to utilise the site for Cold Witness radar research, according to defence research sources. The funds are channelled through the British Ministry of Defence.

Cobra Mist sit-in

Orford Ness was previously the site of another giant OTH radar, codenamed Cobra Mist, which was operated by the US Air Force Security Service from 1971-73. Cobra Mist closed abruptly in June 1983, leading to a three week sit-in by staff. Cobra Mist was believed to monitor ICBM tests and launches.

The US Defence Department has stated that it is spending about $200 million during 1984-85 on the procurement of OTH radar equipment at unspecified sites. The existence of the collaborative US-UK Over The Horizon radar project has been referred to in Congressional testimony several times in the last two years, although key details have been censored from published hearings. US defence officials have refused to discuss Cold Witness altogether.

The leading British scientists who have been involved in Cold Witness are Dr Peter Bradley and Dr Joe King, now retired, of the SERC's Rutherford-Appleton laboratory, at Didcot, near Oxford. Both men this week refused to give any details of their involvement in the Cold Witness project, whilst also claiming that their scientific work was entirely 'open' and not secret. Dr King agreed that he had worked on Cold Witness, but urged that questions be referred to Dr Bradley as he was 'now more involved in Cold Witness than I am'. Asked about Cold Witness, Dr Bradley said that he had nothing to do with the US government directly, had 'worked on contracts for different organisations [but] . . . couldn't say anything at all on that subject (Cold Witness)'.



WATCHING the northern oceans: Published scientific research shows the area covered by the long-range experimental radar used for Cold Witness development, at Cricklade, Wiltshire; a major new station planned for the east coast will enable the US to watch Soviet movements and target cruise missiles over a wide ocean area.

Their published papers also scrupulously avoid mentioning the Cricklade experimental site, referring instead to somewhere in southern England. Locations of similar radars in France and California are, however, given precisely.

Solving key problems

Drs King and Bradley have helped solve key problems in operating the long range type of radar system used in Cold Witness. Secret military research is prohibited by the terms of the Royal Charter which is granted to the SERC. A SERC spokesman this week denied that SERC had received money from any government source in connection with Cold Witness. But SERC's employees at the Rutherford-Appleton Laboratory and elsewhere say that the funds have come to SERC from the government, and that the project is known internally in SERC by its secret codename. SERC officially suggested that military research could be done by SERC employees but 'not under the auspices of SERC'.

Another radar specialist working on OTH radar, Professor Ramsay Shearman of Birmingham University, said this week that the Ministry of Defence has been funding his university department to work on a shorter range version of Cold Witness, which could track ships 'over the horizon' up to a range of about 200 kilometres — far further than conventional radar systems. A prototype of this type of radar is already in operation at Angle, near Pembroke in Wales.

The joint radar project was described to the US Congress in June this year by US Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger, who acknowledged that 'the US is funding a (foreign) feasibility study of OTH radar'. Besides the North Atlantic, he added, its long range 'coverage might also assist in the defence of the Norwegian land area'.

In March this year, the Ministry of Defence were gravely embarrassed when an American scientist working on Cold Witness left an 'address list' of 23 personnel working on the project in a telephone booth at Heathrow airport. The list was published in *The Times*. The staff concerned included the scientists at the Rutherford-Appleton laboratory, as well as Ministry of Defence staff. At the time the list was lost, nothing was learned of Cold Witness other than it was likely to be a new radar system. ●

Additional research: Jane Thomas

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'Old Lady' has coughed up £100m, not Lawson's '£1'

CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER Nigel Lawson deceived the House of Commons on Monday this week when he claimed that the Bank of England 'has paid only £1' to save the private bank, Johnson Matthey Bankers (JMB), from collapse. DUNCAN CAMPBELL reports

ACCORDING to secret information passed to Lawson's staff — and obtained by the *New Statesman* — £100 million was transferred from the Bank of England to JMB on 22 November. Such movements of funds are notified daily to the Treasury; it is extremely unlikely that Treasury officials, in briefing the Chancellor before Monday's statement, would have omitted advising him that £100 million of public funds had just been pumped into the ailing bank.

According to one official, who has seen relevant documents, the Bank of England can say goodbye to this money: 'they won't get it back'. Despite this, Lawson asserted to the House that 'I have given no money, there is no taxpayers' money involved in this, none at all'. Lawson may have been relying on fine distinctions between the Bank of England and its own Banking Department, or between the Treasury's public purse and the Bank of England's quasi-autonomy as a profit-seeking institution. These distinctions are unlikely to cut any ice with MPs who on Monday were demanding to know how much money had been put in to protect private institutions from the imminent collapse of JMB.

Johnson Matthey Bankers (previously part of a prominent gold bullion trading house) came to grief in September due to large bad debts. On 1 October the Bank of England bought JMB for £1, effectively nationalising it and taking on responsibility for losses which may run as high as £250 million. The transaction provoked the committee of enquiry into supervision of banking which was announced Monday afternoon.

The Bank of England hoped to share the burden of rescuing JMB with the private financial sector — which agreed to indemnify JMB's losses up to £75 million.

In summary:

- The Bank has paid out 10 times more than the £10 million it spoke publicly of providing in the early days of the rescue.
- None of the private sector participants in the original rescue plan has yet been asked to pay a penny of its indemnity guarantee.

A Bank of England spokesperson told the *New Statesman* this Monday just after the Chancellor's Commons statement that there has been no rush by depositors to pull money out of JMB, and at first categorically denied that the Bank had made any 'capital injection' into JMB.

Ten minutes later, however, the latter comment was amended and we were told that the Bank has indeed recently 'made deposits' with JMB — now a wholly-owned subsidiary. The official still refused to confirm or deny that the 'deposits' amount to £100 million.

NB: £100 million would keep open the 15 most 'uneconomic' pits now planned for closure, preserving 12,500 mining jobs. ●

UPP

Governor of the Bank Sir Robin Leigh-Pemberton (l), and (r) his master, Chancellor Lawson

MISCELLANY

Sir Frank's bum rap

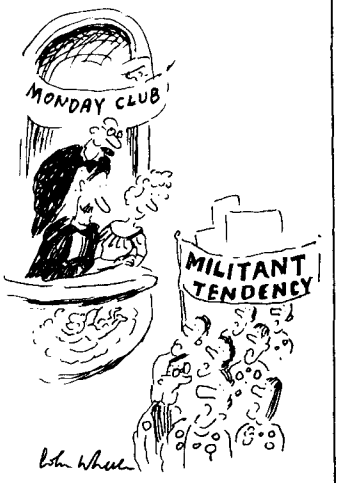
Maybe it was Steven Spielberg's gremlins, busting out of the movie houses. Maybe it was a 'typo', that affectionate term for those little typological infelicities made world-famous by the *Guardian* of yesteryear. Or maybe Sir Frank Layfield actually said it. Oh joy if he did. He was speaking of John Selwyn Gummer, famous for having such a name, but also known to the porter of the Carlton club as chairman of the Conservative party, and in Suffolk for being one of the local MPs. The story is laid in Suffolk. Within the bounds of Suffolk Coastal lies the projected site of the Sizewell B nuclear reactor, into which Sir Frank Layfield, as inspector, is conducting his Guinness book of records length enquiry. On Day 300 of said enquiry, this month, the local MP, JSG in boyish and bespectacled person, gave evidence. The transcript states that Sir Frank called the witness 'Mr Bummer'.

Resin d'etre

Time-Life *books has just brought out a glossy tome on the Soviet Union. Given that till Denis cuddled Raisa Gorbacheva at Chequers this week we were in the middle of the second cold war its tone is remarkably uncritical — even at one point saying that 'for the offspring of peasants, the Revolution has paid off'. But wait! Has 'dirty tricks' at Langley got at p 35. Under the heading 'a love of the outdoors' we're shown a Russian family at their weekend dacha, sitting on the verandah, eating a feast. Some weeds are growing in the foreground. On close inspection they reveal the unmistakable pattern of the leaves of Cannabis Sativa. Just what Langley always said: the Russkies are a bunch of dope smoking junkies. O happy Ruskies.*

Holes in calendar

Did you know — forgive the seasonal note — that you won't be able to hire the Albert Hall for the Eve of the Third Millennium (31 December 1999, *but see below*) until 1990? The Hall will, it's true, pencil in wishful bookings now, but no firm ones. The band of the Grenadier Guards had it for 31 December 1899, which mustn't be allowed to be a precedent. Maybe Militant tendency, who if *The Times* is to be believed have booked the Albert for their 1985 rally, will try to get it for the millennarial moment — or maybe even the as-yet unnamed persons (presumably of a capitalist tendency) who, say Cluttons agents, have just paid over £80,000 for an 882-year interest in a 10-seat grand tier Albert Hall box. Some deep-dyed Tories maybe, hoping for a chance to look down on red revolution. But back to bookings for 3rd Millennium Eve: you and I would suppose that when midnight strikes on 31 December 1999, and AD 2000 begins, it'll be the new millennium.



But mathematicians say nonsense, that won't be till the first second of 2001. And with historians estimating that Christ was born in 7 BC, Christians must welcome in the new millennium on New Year's Day 1983 or 1984, barely 10 years from now. It's enough to give one a headache even before the party . . .

Saving the bawbies

At last its been proved. All you begrudging Lefties who've been making disapproving noises over the amount of money paid out by the government for the privilege of importing an elderly American simply haven't been giving Ian MacG the benefit of the doubt. He's in fact saving huge sums of money for the Coal Board by taking advice from that other veteran, Jimmy Savile. It seems MacGregor uses an OAP railcard whenever he travels on Board business 'but that's the only time, he uses it — he doesn't have time to do private business', says his personal assistant, Miss Mann. 'Its right for him to use the card even if he does earn a high salary because he pays most of it back in British taxes. And if he saves from BR for the Coal Board, it all goes back to the State.' But what about BR's own accounting? Maybe the lines most used by MacGregor will soon be deemed uneconomic. MacGregor's own zeal to cut Coal Board costs does have its limits — he insists on travelling first class.

Ana Gram fiasco

Er. Um. We forget about Xmas post delays. So there aren't enough letters in from you as we go to press to reduce Nigel Lawson to tears with your anagrams of his baleful name. 'Gazza from Glebe, now of SW 20' (what?) did get through before the deadline with 'Right Swollen Onan', but we won't print that. Sounds most unpleasant. See you in the New Year! Or rather: thus are ye won in eye . . .

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Censorship

Police take 2½ years to return books

THE AUTHOR of *Mama Coca*, a comprehensive book on the use of and traffic in cocaine in Latin America, is considering legal action against Scotland Yard after they decided last week to release 4100 copies of his book after holding them for two and a half years.

Says Anthony Henman: 'I'm taking legal advice to sue for loss of earnings — the retail value of the books is around £27,000 — but it would appear I've little form of redress. The police and the DPP have engaged in gross harassment without being willing to face a clean fight in the courts.'

Mama Coca is one of the many drugs books charged in recent years under Section 3 of the Obscene Publications Act. A historic decision at the Old Bailey in June (see *NS* 3 August) acquitted his publishers, Hassle Free Press, of charges of distributing obscene literature under Section 2 of the Act — two popular titles on silocybin mushrooms and growing marijuana.

Ironically it would appear that so-called Latin American dictatorships are more democratic about the right to read *Mama Coca* than is the present British government. The book has been published in Spanish and was serialised in magazines in Bogotá, Colombia, and in Lima, Peru. Much of it is devoted to a sympathetic account of coca leaf chewing by the Indians of the Andes.

Not surprisingly, the US Ambassador in Bogota referred to *Mama Coca* as 'a certain type of literature which has not been helpful'. Says Henman, 'The Americans are repressing the very same business they are generating. This allows governments to portray cocaine as a hard drug like heroin. Coca in its natural state is less harmful than tea or coffee.'

Much harried Henman — why won't the Yard discuss it?

The Great Book of Hashish is another of publisher Bennett's books which will be returned with *Mama Coca* in the next few days. The Yard is still, however, holding several comic book titles, among them *Dr. Atomic, Cocaine Comics* and a feminist-inspired satire entitled *Tits and Clits*. Remarks Bennett of the last 'They're only holding the one whose cover features a man having a vascectomy . . .'

Leading anti-drugs campaigner and MP Teddy Taylor (Conservative, Southend East) unsurprisingly can't bring himself to sympathise with the author and publisher of *Mama Coca*. He told the *NS*: 'I don't blame the police. They have had their initiatives scuppered by recent court decisions. At a time when Britain is facing a time bomb of drug abuse I hope that the Obscene Publications Act can be altered so that books glamourising drugs are not for sale'. What about chewing coca leaves? 'Well, the book makes that sort of thing acceptable.'

Henman retorts, 'Why doesn't Scotland Yard want these things discussed? Is there a danger in Britain today of massive coca leaf abuse? Or are they more interested in maintaining the line dictated by Washington — the fiction of a world-wide war on drugs between the good guys and the bad guys?"

Anita Bennett

Julie Stead: the anger persists

THE FAMILY of Julie Stead, the Bradford mother of three strangled by her boyfriend in March 1983, are angry at the decision to clear four detectives of negligence over her death.

As reported in NS *21 September ('Death of a Battered Mother') West Yorkshire police launched an internal enquiry into the case following complaints by Julie's family that despite a long record of violence towards her by Keith Ward she received no protection; that the subsequent murder enquiry was half-hearted; and that important evidence was overlooked at Ward's eventual trial.*

The report from the investigating team from Humberside police — which is not being made public — was referred to the Police Complaints Board. As a result a detective Inspector was 'advised' about his over-all handling of the investigation, a detective 'advised' about his dealing with an alleged earlier assault, another detective warned about his investigation into a burglary and another warned about his dealing with information relating to the trial.

Julie's family are unhappy that no disciplinary action was taken against the officers involved, and that the police are still refusing to change their methods when dealing with 'domestic violence' cases. The matters are now being pursued with the Attorney General and the West Yorkshire Chief Constable Colin Sampson.

Anne Durham

GLC promises cash help to AIDS voluntary effort

COUNCILLOR Andy Harris, chair of the GLC grants committee, has publicly stated that the GLC will give high priority to funding a voluntary organisation, the Terrence Higgins Trust, in its work meeting the AIDS crisis. Money would enable the trust to take on its first paid workers and find itself suitable premises in Central London.

The Terrence Higgins Trust, which has strong support from among gay men and from within the medical profession, is a registered charity named after the first British man to die with AIDS (no relation of the former Conservative minister, Terence Higgins, MP).

The trust has published leaflets, set up a telephone help-line, is running self-help groups and held a national weekend conference last month (24 November) which drew 300 participants. For the first time in Britain, these included people with AIDS who spoke publicly of their experience. The trust has strong international links and will be hosting a European gay health conference in London next spring.

The shifting pattern

Though AIDS has recently tended to make front pages (and leaders in *The Times* — 21 November) when white heterosexuals and babies get it through blood transfusion from gay men, it's now being appreciated that in Central Africa AIDS apparently has little or nothing to do with homosexuality. It's heterosexually transmitted, and as common as in the United States. In the USA itself to date there have been over 7000 AIDS cases, 70 per cent gay male but increasingly among IV drug users and their heterosexual partners.

In Britain as yet the overwhelming majority of the 100-odd declared AIDS cases have been homosexual and bisexual men, and Londoners — but the official figure grossly understates the problem. Around 20 per cent of gay men attending London STD clinics have been exposed to HTLV-3, the virus now held responsible, compared to less than 5 per cent two years ago. This is exactly the pattern of increase seen in North American cities, two or three years before.

Several thousand British adults must already have been infected and may be infectious to others. It seems that one in every ten gay men infected with HTLV-3 develops AIDS, two years, on average, from first infection. The direct cost to the NHS for medical care is likely to exceed £50 million per thousand cases.

It's therefore remarkable that the DHSS has not seen fit to invite gay male organisations to discuss its strategy for tackling AIDS. This lack of interest is not shared by gay men themselves, nor as is now evident, by the GLC. The Terrence Higgins Trust is joining forces with the Haemophilia Society to brief MPs on what the DHSS isn't doing.

*The Terrence Higgins Trust can be reached by writing to: BM AIDS, London, WC1N 3XX, or by telephone, on: 01-278 8745.

Julian Meldrum

Julian Meldrum writes regularly on AIDS for *Capital Gay*, the 15,000 circulation London-area gay weekly.

JAILED MINERS

If you have any names and addresses of miners who'll be in jail over Xmas or the New Year, and would like to help in an effort to organise messages of support to them, please write to **Cathie Lloyd, researcher, Cities of London & Westminster public order research group (9 Poland St W1V 3DG)**, who will circulate them to trades councils and Labour movement bodies.

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PETER KELLNER

At last the sequel: Nineteen eighty-five

IT WAS a bright cold day in April and the clock struck thirteen. The engineers' experiment had succeeded: Big Ben was back in full working order.

Inside the House of Commons, Neil Kinnock was more than usually eager as he waited for Prime Minister's Question Time to begin. He had only just survived the winter with his political optimism intact: at times he had thought the combination of the miners' strike and Labour's internal feuds would destroy him and the party.

However, the decision of the miners' executive to ballot their members on the deal Stan Orme had fixed up — followed by the two-to-one vote to return to work — had turned the tide. MORI's latest private polls for the unions had arrived on Kinnock's desk that morning. They showed an encouraging rise in the proportion of union members now willing to vote in favour of the political levy. For the first time in six months Kinnock now felt sure — not that Labour would win the next election, but that it would remain solvent.

It had been a close-run thing. In January one opinion poll had shown the Liberal/SDP Alliance overtaking Labour. (This followed December's Gallup poll, reporting Labour only 3.5 points ahead: Labour 31 per cent, Alliance 27.5.) In retrospect it had been a rogue poll; but, just as during the 1983 general election when a single poll published in the *Sunday Mirror* had shown the Alliance in second place, its impact was dramatic. The talking classes talked once again about the death of the Labour Party and its replacement by the Alliance as the main opposition to the Tories.

Publicly, Kinnock scorned such talk. 'There is not the remotest chance of that rag-bag of drop-outs, turncoats and misguided weirdos providing an effective challenge to the Tories', he had told Brian Walden in his new year *Weekend World* interview; 'The Labour Party has not, is not, should not, will not, cannot and is politically, temperamentally, constitutionally and ideologically unable to cede its inevitable, historical and absolutely urgent and necessary task of rescuing Britain from this government'.

Privately, however, Kinnock was less sure. 'Shit,' he said on first hearing the news of the poll; 'if we don't turn that round, and fast, we're bloody finished'. He remembered 1981, when the Alliance had surged into first place while Labour was busy deciding whether Denis Healey or Tony Benn should be its deputy leader. But the Alliance's 1981 bubble was always liable to burst. Its support was too shallow, it was all things to all voters and it had enjoyed unparallelled media exposure.

Now, in 1985, the Alliance presented a more formidable threat. This time its support had grown without significant media exposure. It was no longer the shiny, new but unknown quantity. David Owen was proving a far more effective SDP leader than Roy Jenkins had been. Kinnock feared that this time the Alliance would hold its support and that Labour would be condemned to permanent third place — in votes, if not seats.

The trouble was that despair would breed defeat. If enough people thought that Labour was finished, it *would* be finished. For not only was the Alliance's condition more solid than four years earlier; Labour's was more fragile. In immediate terms, if most trade unionists were to think that Labour was in terminal decline, they would be more likely to vote against the political levy. If the big unions all voted 55-45 per cent in favour, Labour would survive; if they all voted 55-45 per cent against, the party would be doomed.

At one point Kinnock feared that only two major unions would remain affiliated — the miners and the electricians. Only one thing depressed him more than dealing with Arthur Scargill and Eric Hammond, and that was sitting with them round the same table.

SUDDENLY the clouds began to lift from Kinnock's gloom. The following two polls showed the Labour was still second, though not by much. All the talk of the Alliance replacing Labour subsided as quickly as it had started; which did not mean the Alliance was now finished, merely that political commentators are a fickle lot.

What really started to restore Labour's fortunes was the end of the miners' strike. Stan Orme played a crucial role. He did not manage to extract any further concessions from the coal board; but shuttling discreetly to and fro he devised a form of words that a majority on the miners' executive was prepared to accept. They knew that some jobs would now be lost; but they had achieved enough to be able to claim victory, as Mick McGahey told reporters on the steps of Congress House. (Laryngitis had kept Arthur Scargill in Sheffield.)

The point about Orme's role, combined with increasing pressure on the miners from the TUC, was that the Labour Party and the union movement had been seen to play the role that the government had abdicated. When the papers dissected the small print of the NUM's agreement with the coal board — a particularly vicious piece appeared under the once-respected 'Insight' by-line in the *Sunday Times* — they reached much the same conclusion as that provided by Peter Walker, the energy secretary, in an off-the-record briefing to lobby journalists: the coal board had won hands down.

Such claims, it quickly transpired, were beside the point. Few voters were interested in who had technically won or lost — merely that a divisive strike was over, but with no thanks to the government.

The way in which the strike had ended was important for another reason. By allowing the miners to *claim* victory — however implausibly in Fleet Street's eyes — the task of condemning Labour's leadership for betraying the strike was confined to the sectarian press; the dilemma of the Left was neatly illustrated by *Tribune*, which carried on page one an editorial accusing Kinnock of treachery, and on page three an analysis showing that Fleet Street had got it all wrong and the miners had in fact won. Scargill's verdict on the role of the Labour leadership was eagerly sought by newspapers; but his laryngitis lingered on.

Meanwhile the government had been facing increasing difficulties. The committee stage of the bill to abolish the GLC and the metropolitan counties had gone badly from the start. Twice the opposition had won snap votes when four Tory MPs voted against the government and another three were absent.

Reports started appearing that Mrs Thatcher was thinking of sacking Patrick Jenkin, the environment secretary; and while Downing Street officially dismissed these stories as 'pure speculation', a highly impure row took place in front of astonished MPs and journalists in one of the Commons bars between Jenkin and Bernard Ingham, Mrs Thatcher's press secretary. When, at the following Prime Minister's Question Time, Mrs Thatcher was asked identical questions about Jenkin and Ingham — 'would she back him or sack him' — she became more than usually tetchy.

That, Kinnock mused as he leaned forward, his left hand on the despatch box as he prepared to catch the Speaker's eye, had been three weeks ago. Since then life for the government had become progressively more difficult. Clive Ponting's acquittal had led to a spate of leaks from civil servants — the most damaging concerned Nigel Lawson's plans for a new property tax; unemployment had continued to rise; an indiscreet remark by Ronald Reagan destroyed at a stroke Mrs Thatcher's claim to have a special relationship with him.

Kinnock stood up. 'Mr Speaker, is the Prime Minister yet ready to admit what everyone on this side of the House, and most hon. members opposite, know, which is that the government's policies over the past six years now lie in ruins?'

Slowly, and just a little diffidently, John Biffen rose to reply. □

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LOVE, THE MEDIA AND THE GLC

Frankie Rickford looks at the tabloids' apoplexy over the GLC's report on 'heterosexism' — and at what council action can realistically achieve

THE GREATER London Council Women's Committee has probably received a more hostile press in the course of its short life than any other council committee, ever. Ridicule, abuse and savage criticism are heaped upon it practically every week from one direction or another.

Much of it is inaccurate. The *Daily Mail* reported last month that 'Militant GLC feminists are launching a £700,000 campaign challenging the idea that sex between men and women is normal.' This confused a £500,000 grant for activities for International Women's Day next March and an estimated £100,000 for a women's handbook with a report from the women's committee to the council on GLC policy as it affects gay men and lesbians.

Lynda Lee Potter, also in the *Mail*, filled most of a page with her fantasy of what the world the women's committee wants would be like and hung the piece on the same confused story. She also reports a plan to appoint an officer 'to challenge anti-lesbianism and presumably to try and persuade any woman who is happily married that popping into bed with a girlfriend may well be the only path to true emancipation'.

The idea that sex and romance are other than purely private experiences which, in the formulae of popular journalism, happen to us because of 'nature' or fate or the stars is highly disruptive of those rules (how else can the press interpret human relationships?). To suggest, as the women's committee report does, that our desires and affections are organised institutionally as a means of social control appears to Lynda Lee Potter to threaten the possibility of pleasure itself. The women behind the report, she warns, 'concentrate their energy and venom on trying to abolish everything that is enriching, entrancing, fun and innocently frivolous in our lives.'

The piece is duly illustrated with a cartoon of shorn, ear-ringed 'feminists' confiscating a woman's false eyelashes while a little girl weeps because her Cindy doll has been thrown in the dustbin.

It's a mistake to ignore writers like Ms Potter because her views undoubtedly have a resonance among millions of other women and men who, at the least, find her world a solace against that other sexual reality where romantic chivalry plays little role. But the attacks on the women's committee haven't just come from such predictable sources. *Time Out*, the London magazine which still considers itself radical and has a large gay readership, ran two prominent attacks on it in November, one of which prompted a warning letter from a GLC councillor. The other by Paul Charman, pours scorn on the same report for 'giving birth to a brand new -ism' — heterosexism — and cites it as evidence of the committee's 'determination to fulfil all the unkind attacks upon them.'

THE VILIFIED document was written by officers in the council's Women's Support Unit in response to a report by GLC leader Ken Livingstone last May. It was received by full Council in October. Seven committees including the women's committee were required by a council resolution to report back on the action they planned to take in pursuit of the GLC's policy of 'supporting gay men and lesbians to combat discrimination and achieve equal access to public services.' The contentious appointment is in an 'equalities team' set up by the women's committee to monitor the implications of its own policies for disadvantaged groups of women — ethnic minority, disabled, lesbian and older women.

Livingstone's report, which GLC Tories supported, was the most recent in a series of public statements he's made in support of lesbians and gay men since he's been leader. In August 1981, three months after the GLC elections, he told Harrow Gay Unity group he believed everyone was born bisexual. The tabloids went crazy. The next year he addressed the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights fringe meeting at the Labour Party conference. All but one journalist walked out when the delegates asked a *Sun* reporter to leave.

In his May report to the council, Ken based his case for spending money on gay and lesbian projects on an estimate of the proportion of the Greater London population who are gay and lesbian, who pay rates but get much less for their money than the heterosexual family. He listed the initiatives the council had taken on behalf of lesbians and gay men and some of the projects it has funded. Since the election he reports grants totalling £292,548 to various gay and lesbian groups and a commitment of £751,000 towards setting up the London Lesbian and Gay Centre, due to open early next year in Cowcross Street, Smithfield. (The money is 0.8 per cent of the GLC grants budget from its election to next May.)

The women's committee's controversial response takes him to task for not naming and confronting the oppression lesbians and gay men face. They define this as heterosexism, 'an institutionalised system' says their paper 'that openly and energetically propagandises heterosexuality as an oppression that affects all women's lives. A heterosexist society promotes the attitude that only heterosexuality and heterosexual family life is normal and natural . . .'

It concludes that in such a society it is misleading to refer to 'sexual orientation', implying 'a choice between two equal sexualities' or to percentages of homosexuals, thus ignoring 'the institutional processes by which heterosexuals maintain their majority.'

The report thus challenges the idea that sexuality is a choice, or principally a matter of the Left's civil rights. Rather it focuses on the oppression created by the way relations within and between the sexes are organised and the savage penalties for not conforming to the heterosexual norm.

The GLC 'heterosexism heavies' in the eyes of the *Daily Mail*, 7 November

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UPP

Valerie Wise, chair of the women's committee, feels the report has challenged her own lifestyle

Heterosexism complements sexism by keeping women apart. It undermines their power to negotiate the terms of their relationships with men by not allowing women any way out. It doesn't rob them altogether of such power, though, as Jane Walker, writing on heterosexism in the GLC women's committee bulletin (issue 14), suggests: 'The fundamental questions should be why are so many women coerced into heterosexuality and why do they give into it.'

Such formulations are rather paradoxical, for while heterosexual women are being urged to take control of their lives they are also being presented as victims of an almost omnipotent conspiracy. (However, heterosexual feminists are in no position to moan about such formulations as they invariably leave the lesbians in the women's movement to do the work on the subject.)

THE WOMEN'S committee report was intended to shake the complacency of heterosexual councillors. Women's committee chair Valerie Wise backs the report and acknowledges that it made her think about her (hetero)sexuality: 'I don't feel threatened by it but it is querying my lifestyle by explaining the sort of conditioning that influences people's feelings for each other.'

Ken hadn't actually read the report when he spoke to the *New Statesman* but his analysis does go deeper than his own May report suggests: 'My own view is that everybody is born with a very wide sexual potential and it's the pressures of society that set you into a particular pattern,' he told me.

The report's impact on the public has been mediated by a very hostile press, leaving the GLC powerless to defend itself. That vulnerability must query whether the council is equipped politically to change the world in the way it is setting out to do, let alone change the world in the way many radical pressure groups would like.

A ton of press releases, leaflets, posters and new appointments don't make a mass movement, or even a campaign, and those activists with very high expectations of the GLC may be tempted to concentrate on convincing the Labour groups at County Hall instead of Mrs Bloggs across the road in an attempt to shorten the process of change. Lesbian and gay socialists may now be looking to the GLC to be the Labour Party they'd like to see. Others — and there was evidence of this at a recent open meeting to discuss a GLC charter for lesbian and gay rights — are moving in on the council as a place to live out the life of their own movement, instead of recognising the role and limitations of a municipal institution, however sympathetic.

What do those who have invested time and energy lobbying and thrashing out policy proposals at County Hall hope for, beyond non-discriminatory public services? One man, active in the group around the lesbian and gay charter, told the *New Statesman* he believed the GLC could — and already had — inspired the visible gay and lesbian communities with confidence by taking up a public position of support. If the GLC could not change the world, a newly confident gay movement might.

Ken Livingstone takes a similar view of the council's role: that if as public authority it makes statements supporting oppressed groups — Irish people, black people, lesbians and gays — their self-confidence is boosted to fight with more determination on their own behalf. As for the rest of the population, 'it's a long, uphill struggle.' 'The GLC is an arm of the State that just happens to have fallen into the hands of radical socialists. I believe we should use it as a platform to change hearts and minds.'

Valerie Wise, who hasn't got Ken's TV charm but is still a thoughtful and principled politician, says the elected members wouldn't be doing their job if they didn't take up issues that fall outside the traditional orbit of town hall politics. 'I was elected as a political person. To drop the things you thought were important once you got into office would be to separate yourself from your past.'

Valerie takes the press's hostility to the women's committee very seriously. 'It's affecting people's image of us even inside the council. We're being attacked over non-controversial issues like childcare — people protest at the money we're spending without thinking that perhaps we're paying staff decent wages for a change or providing a better worker-child ratio. But we can't let the press attacks deflect us from what we want to do.'

In a bid to improve relations with the press she has arranged a series of lunches with women journalists 'to show I haven't got horns and to try and explain the work of the committee.' (Unfortunately she became ill the day she was due to meet Lynda Lee Potter.)

ONE OF the most radical institutional reforms at the GLC has been to invite in interested groups to help formulate policy. But how representative or accountable can the lay groups acting as consultants to the GLC be? Anyone can go along to the Gay Working Party, or the Women's Co-ordinating Committee and elect voting co-optees onto council committees.

The meetings are well publicised (although the last women's co-ordinating committee meeting was advertised on a quarter page of *City Limits* magazine the week after it took place). All the same, it's a mode of participation that is much more familiar to those with a history of political activism. Providing a creche and a minibus will help Mrs Bloggs get to the meetings but won't necessarily make her feel they are 'for her', or enable her to express her views in a way that those fluent in the language and behaviour codes of political meetings (and *New Statesman* articles) can. These can be just as alien and arcane as the rituals of bureaucracy. Nor can it be assumed that Ms Smith, because she's a feminist, represents Mrs Bloggs.

By building relationships with movements whose organisational traditions are radically different from the structures and procedures of local government, and by trying to use the municipal machinery to do things it was never designed for, the GLC has inevitably thrown up many contradictions and collided head on with the common sense of the status quo.

Because it has innovated and struggled and blazed a trail for future national as well as local administrations — whether or not it survives itself — it's all the more important to review its progress critically and — without underestimating its courage — take its problems seriously. □

Thanks to Beatrix Campbell and Brendan Martin for their help.

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RESELECTION BATTLES

Stewart Lansley and Glenwyn Benson preview the 1985 tactics

THE PROCESS which began last week of selecting Labour's candidates for the next election will be a telling indication of how today's Labour Party sees the role of MPs and of representative democracy. Although choosing a candidate is still a jealously guarded private matter for each constituency party, pressure from outside groups is mounting to get more candidates who represent, in their persons as much as their views, the 'hidden' constituencies of women and black people. (Labour has now only 11 women and no black MPs.) This view of representation is more favoured by the Left than the Right of the party.

BLAC, the Black Activists Campaign, will be especially determined to influence selection. BLAC was formed in early December by hard left black activists from London, Birmingham, Cardiff and Manchester. Leading figures in it like Mark Wadsworth from Lambeth and Narendra Makanji from Haringey are also members of the Labour Black Sections' National Steering Committee. BLAC is seeking safe seats for at least 15 black people — half the number which, they claim, would fairly represent the black 4½ per cent of the population.

They have drawn up a list of 15 safe and marginal seats, 13 of them in London, plus Leicester East and Leicester South, on the basis of the size of the local black electorate. The list excludes seats where the sitting MP is on the left, such as Clare Short in Birmingham Ladywood (a black population of around a half) and Stuart Holland in Vauxhall because they think 'they will be difficult to unseat.'

Of the 15 seats on the list, eight have Labour MPs, of whom five are expected to stand down, leaving three deselection battles. The rest are Tory-held margins. One constituency on the list, Lewisham East, is considering having an all-black short list. By early in the New Year BLAC is planning to have prepared slates of both 'hard Left' policies and candidates for the seats. Ths distinguishes them sharply from the politically 'broad' National Steering Group. (Indeed, because the politics of black people can't be taken for granted, the Tories may be the first party since the war to have a black MP. There are strong rumours that Rhodes Boyson, MP for Brent North, may be persuaded to take a peerage in favour of an Asian candidate for this Tory stronghold.)

The 'broad' approach has also been adopted by the Women's Action Committee which is circulating constituencies with a list of women candidates, right or left, who have a proven track record of supporting women's issues. They want a woman on every short list in the country.

THE MOST contentious organisation is the Target Labour Government group (TLG). At present it is based at London's County Hall but it is going national in February with a policy conference in Birmingham. Although the group's meetings were originally open when it formed earlier this year, that, as one member now says, was 'a mistake'. Now they want only the far Left to attend. Target Labour Government also embraces the black and women's cause, with a target of 50 per cent women and 14 per cent black candidates in London. But their aims are wider: to swell the ranks of the left-wing Campaign Group in parliament and, as one member, Jeremy Corbyn puts it, to promote reforms like bringing the selection of a Labour cabinet under PLP control.

David Fowler

Peter Shore: '. . .overwhelmingly white, middle class and pro-capitalist. . .'?

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But from the word go, TLG has been split over tactics. In August in a front page article on TLG, the journal *London Labour Briefing* indicated the group wanted to oust four MPs, Reg Freeson, Peter Shore, John Silkin and Guy Barnett. It described them as: 'Overwhelmingly white, middle class and pro-capitalist — anachronisms utterly incapable of speaking the language or voicing the anger of the communities from which our strength now derives.' Hardliners in the group wanted to go further with a list of Labour seats to win for the Left. Others, including Ken Livingstone, argued for concentrating on getting their candidates for Tory marginals, involving no rancorous, centrally organised deselection campaign. Livingstone hasn't attended a meeting since and is dismissive of TLG's tactics.

Meanwhile, yet another candidate for deselection has emerged, Norman Atkinson, MP for Tottenham, besides well-known targets like Frank Field in Birkenhead, Michael Cocks in Bristol and Gerald Kaufman in Manchester. Atkinson is condemned by the hard Left as being too pro-Moscow and part of a Labour tradition which 'has never lifted a finger to change things in the party'. Perhaps more importantly, he has the added weakness of having inherited part of the seat of leading (white) left-winger Reg Race in the 1983 boundary changes. Although Tottenham is on BLAC's target list because of its large black population, it is Race who is the front runner to beat Atkinson.

Compared to Peter Shore, MP for Bethnal Green and Stepney, Atkinson is small fry. The Left's main choice to stand against Shore is former constituency chairwoman Jill Cove, now President of the National Association of Probation Officers. However, on a full turn-out Shore can rely on at least 39 votes out of the 81 on the current General Committee (GC), although the selection is now likely to be made by a new GC to be elected in March.

Shore's safety factor is the fear that without him Labour will lose the seat. The Liberals took 30 per cent of the vote last time and an LWT/Harris poll for *The London Programme* shows that if Shore were not Labour candidate, 22 per cent of electors would be less likely to vote Labour compared with 10 per cent who would be more likely to. The number would be sure to grow, as it did in Bermondsey, during a hyped and prolonged media campaign over deselection. A recent constituency press release, emphasising his unity with his local party in supporting the miners, indicates that Shore is already working on a reconciliation.

Perhaps the greatest problem for those who want both clear left-wing candidates and black candidates where there is a large black constituency is in Brent East, where Livingstone still hopes to replace Reg Freeson. Many on the GC would probably support Livingstone because of his politics. But as a while male, he might be rejected by women and black activists. Overall, this time round, the deselection mongers could turn out to be paper tigers, with the black and women's sections most determined to have effect. □

This article is based on research for LWT's The London Programme *shown last Friday.*

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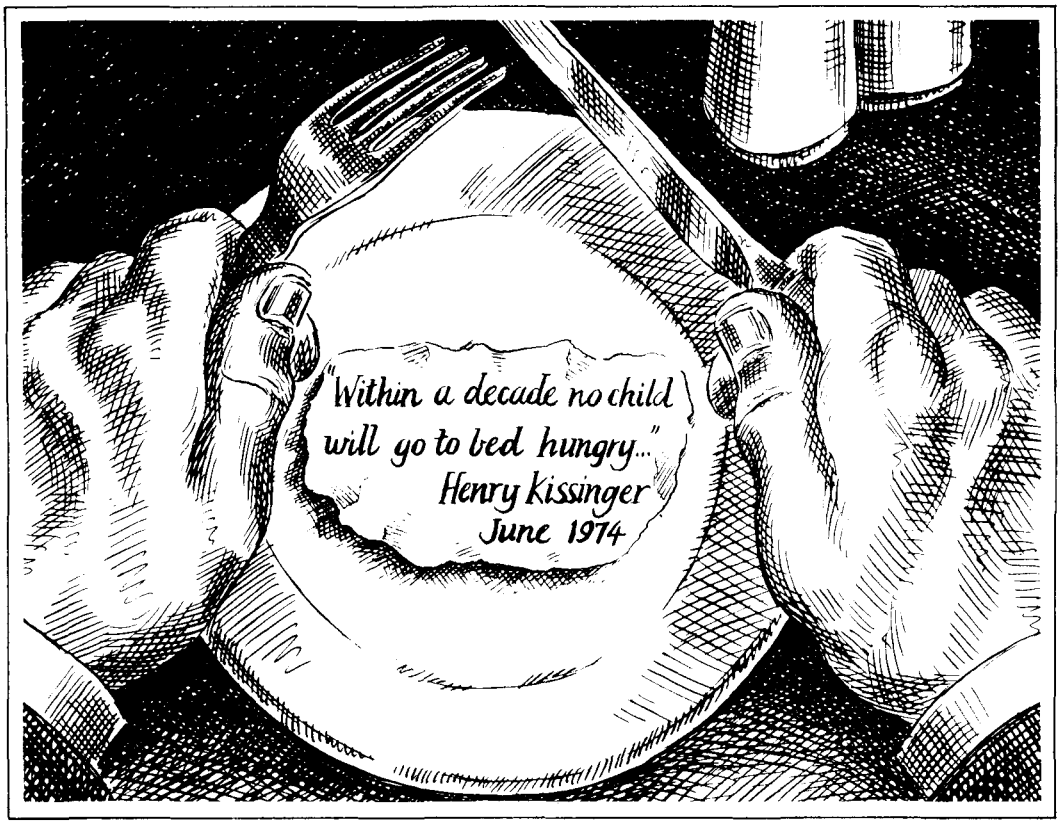

HENRY KISSINGER, EAT YOUR WORDS.

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WHO IS PAYING THE PIPER?

Whatever their first intentions and protestations, the working miners' leadership is now firmly connected to the Tory establishment of lawyers, business and the party itself. Last week Mark Hollingsworth exposed the role of the Tory Party and the National Coal Board in helping to set up the working miners' organisation. In this second article he describes their links with business

FROM THE start the National Working Miners' Committee has denied receiving any large donations from business. But there have been substantial contributions from the business establishment to the special fund to pay the legal costs of those fighting the NUM leadership. In mid-July, it was pointed out to Sir Hector Laing, chairman of United Biscuits (which gave £43,000 to the Tories in 1983) and close confidant of Mrs Thatcher, that the legal costs for the suits against the NUM could be as high as £150,000. Sir Hector immediately drafted an open letter to over 100 leading British businessmen, appealing for donations to help Ken Foulstone and Bob Taylor (the two Yorkshire miners who had had the strike declared illegal in the High Court).

The letter was sent to company chairmen and the senior management of manufacturing companies, merchant banks and insurance groups. This appeal made explicit the identity of political interest between the business establishment and the defeat of the strike and NUM leadership. Businessmen should contribute to the working miners' legal costs because, said the letter, 'they are in the front line fighting for what we believe in and they need to know they have friends'. Within three weeks, £30,000 had been raised and deposited in the 'Miners Ballot Fund' at PO Box 20 in Newark. The account is handled by lawyers Hodgkinson and Tallents, who are acting for working miners Robert Taylor and Ken Foulstone in the case against the NUM.

When asked on 29 July who was financing miners generally, Chris Butcher, who with his alias Silver Birch, is perhaps Britain's most notorious strike-breaker, said: 'To be honest, it's from wealthy business people who want the strike to finish. Their names will never come out'. Among the rich and powerful to contribute to the strike breakers' legal costs and other expenses have been Lord Taylor, Lord and Lady Hesketh, Andrew Simpson (a racehorse syndicate manager), the Liberal Party (£400 to the National Working Miners' Committee), David Hart (£100), Sir Hector Laing, Lord Hanson and several small businesses. It is true, of course, that hundreds of ordinary individuals have given money to the working miners, but at least 20 per cent has come from big business.

Some of these businesses have a vested interest in the strike being defeated. Take Lord Taylor of Hadfield, founder and new President of the Taylor Woodrow Group, the building and civil engineering contractor. His company operates highly profitable open cast mining operations under contract to the National Coal Board. According to 1983 NCB figures, profits for open cast mining were £211 million, after £140 million had been paid out in private contractors' fees. In June 1984, Taylor Woodrow carried out a feasibility study into the possible purchase of two power stations, Plymouth B and Carmathen Bay, which would be fuelled by their own open cast mines. Any long term strategy of weakening the NUM involves reducing reliance on NCB coal. Lord Taylor is on the National Committee of the Freedom Association. In 1983 Taylor Woodrow gave £44,035 to the Conservative Party.

Lord Hanson, Chairman of the Hanson Trust finance company, has been another to give money to the working miners, although as a spokesperson said, 'I'm sure Lord Hanson wouldn't like to comment on that'. He also has his finger in the energy pie. The Hanson Trust controls British Ever-Ready and SLD, a pump hire company, both of which have contracts with the National Coal Board. In 1983 Lord Hanson's company gave £80,000 to Tory Party funds.

SOLICITORS ACTING for the working miners also have close links with the Conservative Party. Hodgkinson and Tallents is bristling with live Tory connections. One of their solicitors is Jeremy Ware, chairman of Grantham Conservative Association. Grantham's MP is Tory Douglas Hogg whose wife, Sarah Hogg, is Economics Editor of *The Times*. According to a forthcoming book by Michael Crick*, Ms Hogg has been advising the National Working Miner's Committee on their public relations.

Another of the firm's solicitors is Andrew Fearn, a member of the Tory Party and former secretary of Newark Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The third partner representing the working miners is David Payne, who is former Conservative Mayor of Newark and is currently leader of the ruling Tory group of Newark District Council.

David Negus, a lawyer from the Derbyshire firm Ellis-Fermor, represents the National Working Miners' Committee. He has not been a member of a Tory Association since his days as a student at Hull University. But at a fringe meeting called by the Society of Conservative Lawyers at this year's Tory party conference, he said: 'The Conservatives are the only political party capable of grasping the nettle of the challenge posed by the miners' strike'. He later qualified his remarks: 'I was saying that the use of the law depends on the Conservative Party to have the political will to follow it through. You can't divorce the legal implications from the political issues . . . In actual fact, I am more sympathetic to the SDP and David Owen because they are prepared to use the law'.

It was David Negus who suggested appointing Herbert Brewer as the Receiver to seize the NUM's assets. Perhaps it is not surprising that the criticisms of Brewer's Conservative links, leading to his resigning the receivership, were strong. Since May, he has been chairman of the Nottinghamshire/Derbyshire branch of the Institute of Directors, which has been vociferously calling on the government to use the law against the miners. A Tory councillor for 30 years until 1979, Brewer is also vice-president of West Hallam Conservatives. Another solicitor for the working miners is Nicholas Lyell, Conservative MP for Mid-Bedfordshire since 1983. He represented three Derbyshire miners in June to seek a court order restraining the NUM from suspending any Derbyshire miner who continued to work. Mr Lyell has been Parliamentary Private Secretary to Sir Michael Havers, the Attorney-General, since 1979. He is also Vice-Chairman of the Society of Conservative lawyers.

The most immediate and tangible effect of the working miners' activities and their support from the Tory establishment, could come on 20 December when the Area Council of the Nottinghamshire NUM meets. It will vote on resolutions and amendments initiated by Colin Clarke, president of the National Working Miners' Committee, to change the Notts miners' rule-book. If passed with a two-thirds majority, it could mean the complete seccession and isolation of the Notts Area. This is because a resolution from Pye Hill No 1 colliery, Clarke's pit, calls for the complete deletion of Rule 30, which deals specifically with 'the overriding authority of the National Union of Mineworkers' over the county association.

The working miners constantly deny that they want a breakaway union. But on 22 July, Clarke told Graham Turner in the *Sunday Telegraph* that 'The only way Notts would ever break away was if they (the NUM leadership) brought in things like Rule 51 [the disciplinary code] . . . If Scargill pushed that through and suspended the branch officials at a pit, then you'd get a united front and they'd have forced us out. On 10 August, Rule 51 was brought in at the NUM's annual conference by 167,000 card votes to 22,000. The next day the National Working Miners' Committee held their first meeting at Castle Donnington Guest House, near East Midlands airport. It was that very weekend that, supported by co-ordinated ministerial speeches from Peter Walker, Leon Brittan and Tom King, the committees campaign went public. □

**Scargill and the Miners*, by Michael Crick, Penguin, to be published January 1985.

Thanks to Sandra Greenwood of Channel 4's Union World *for her help in researching these articles.*

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Stefano Cagnoni/Report

CHRISTMAS

BUT ONCE A YEAR

John Rose looks at how working miners' wives are dealing with the problems of an unwaged 'season of good cheer'

ROSE TENNANT, wife of a Shirebrook miner, was collecting money on the streets of North London again this morning. It was pouring with rain and very cold, but she didn't care. Last week she and her friends took £700 back to Shirebrook in North Derbyshire, a mixture of street donations and contributions from schools, hospitals and factories. In London's East End, an emergency delegation of women calling itself Send Santa to Shirebrook was also hard at work.

Of course, the national Christmas Appeal, which has produced over a £¼ million, has given the hundreds of miners and miners' wives, who have been collecting money daily in our towns and cities, a tremendous fillip; so have the 130,000 new toys delivered by the French unions; and so, not least, have the unrecorded number of car loads, van loads and bus loads of toys, food and carrier bags full of uncounted pound notes and loose change delivered personally this week to most pit villages by tireless supporters' groups all over the country.

But Rose is still not satisfied. How can she be? Shirebrook is split between striking and working miners. And the prospect of the working miners (scabs, in Rose's words) flaunting a luxious Christmas before her very eyes, and more worryingly before the eyes of the strikers' children, is particularly obnoxious.

'But,' she says defiantly, 'our Christmas will be better than theirs. Of course it will be poorer. But our heads are held high. They will have to creep about. We know if we don't win this struggle we may never have a decent Christmas again. And don't worry about our children. They know what's going on. They've been marvellous. They've never moaned when they haven't got the 10p to buy a bag of sweets or ice cream.'

Nevertheless Rose knows only too well that the higher moral standards of the strikers may, alone, not be sufficient to carry everyone across the divide to the New Year. Providing toys for every child *is* a priority. And she says that isolated miners in freezing cold homes for the ten long days that run from the weekend before Christmas to New Year's Day are just the sort of prey that the National Coal Board will be looking for in January to whip up a renewed back-to-work movement. The lethal combination of loneliness and the cold could sap the will of the most determined.

'The biggest problem is with the heating.' She says. 'We are relying, now, on burning logs. But we can't find enough to go round. So the priority is miners with children and older miners.' She and her husband don't have children. They are in their twenties. They have no heating in their home at all.

The school, which operates as the centre, will be open all Christmas. 'Anyone who is feeling a bit fed up will be able to come down there for a warm, a hot drink and something to eat. And there'll always be someone there to have a chat to.'

Throughout the coal areas, isolated single miners are a worry. But so too are miners whose wives simply cannot stand the pressure of the strike any longer. It has to be said that a family on the point of breaking up has become a reason for a miner returning to work. The Left has tended to romanticise the part played by the miners' wives in the struggle, for unless the area is well organised, and quite a few aren't, it is particularly easy for the women to become demoralised, helpless and resentful.

Christmas in the coalfield in 1984 is going to be a real test of the activists' ability to maintain morale against the twin pillars of Christmas, extravagant feasting and present giving, and nuclear family life. It will be a strange mixture of old and new. New are the conditions that have grown out of the long struggle; the tremendous solidarity, the will to rise above the hardship, the women (and men) collectors, away from their homes and husbands (and wives) until Christmas Eve in distant towns and cities. There will be community Christmas parties for both children and adults, and discos for youth in almost every village. Collective kitchens will serve Christmas dinner on the Friday, Saturday, Sunday before Christmas, often to be shared with supporters from the distant cities.

But old is the desire for a traditional Christmas Day with family. Even here there is a difference. Many families will have an invited guest, a single miner or perhaps a widow or widower and on Christmas afternoon many miners and their wives will nip down to the centre to see if there's anyone still alone.

The memory of this Christmas will stay with the miners' children until they have their own grandchildren in 2048, and Thatcher and MacGregor are long gone. □

Father Christmas under arrest: not for breaking and entering via a chimney but for collecting toys for miners' children

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DIARY

Fay Weldon

Well! Jesus belongs to the middle classes. New translations of the Bible and a better understanding of Palestinian life must lead us to this unhappy, pleasing-to-Thatcher conclusion. There was no stable: there was no inn. The guest annexe being in use, Mary gave birth in the warm and comfortable living room of Joseph's Bethlehem relatives. If ox and ass attended, it was coincidental: they were brought in, as was the custom, for the night. It was the Holy Family moved over, not the cattle. Joseph, being a carpenter, was a prosperous and respectable member of the community. Rather, I suppose, like being a Grantham grocer. This is the kind of thing you find out if you get up early on Sunday morning and listen to the religious programme. Better to stay in bed.

○

But we, the people, are not so easily put down. We will cling to our misconceptions, we will have our faith, hope and charity. A large van full of toys for the miners' Christmas set out this morning from the neighbouring village of Pilton. Now Pilton is studded with retired generals and infilled with building contractors, and so blue it would whiten the entire nation's dirty linen, yet the van filled so full so fast that the organising farmer — Michael Eaves of Glastonbury Pop Festival fame — had to cry stop! stop! within twelve hours of putting the word about. Nor were they toys tossed out to make room for the new season's avalanche; most were new. Even those who believe — from the safety of their prosperity — that the more toys a child has the more wretched it is likely to be, bit back objections and gave. Though many would like them to, it is clear the miners cannot be expected to carry everyone's moral can, and rejoice in the simplicity of poverty.

○

But those of us who have, I suspect, are simply getting tired of it and want to *give it away* to those who have not. We are, little by little, submitting to conscience, in spite of the government's determination that we should live by self-interest. The young are outraged by the decision not to relieve their Ethiopian charity disc of VAT. The stream of blatant lies which issue from officialdom, unemployment figures, education cuts, the stunning effrontery of the Telecom operation, moves them not a whit — what else can be expected from the wrinklies? — but this has got to them. Mrs Thatcher turns overnight from Mother Courage to Old Mrs Meanie. It will do her no good. They may even vote.

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I must say the young, this Christmas, seem less depressed than last. Judging by the pop videos, they no longer expect instant nuclear obliteration, but to survive through to an agreeably heroic if shambolic life amongst the post-holocaust rubble, where a makeshift technology triumphs and it doesn't matter if you're missing an arm or an eye because everyone's in the same boat. They rather look forward to it. We wrinklies have simply got inured to our fear.

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I aerobiced the other day in a class which was effortlessly moving to Frankie Goes to Hollywood's 'Two Tribes'. The beat was terrific, but the long intoned intro was offering instruction as to how to behave in the hours after The Bomb; always bringing out your dead but being careful to remember to fill in the identification tags. None of us faltered in our step. Last year we heard: this year we're deaf.

○

Down here in the West Country the conspiracy theory of government flourishes: either we see smog-free to clear horizons or the mud gets in our eyes — take your pick. An interesting speculation lately, as Polish coal supplies give way to American, is that Mrs Thatcher organised the coal strike so that Mr MacGregor's own coal fields would benefit by this lively market. In another current scenario, mixing *Dynasty* and Richard Condo's *Manchurian Candidate*, Dennis is the master criminal (tee-hee! now I have the whole world in my power!) and Margaret only went into politics so that she could eventually give away Hong Kong and Mark could make a killing.

○

Now that's happened she can relax. Carol's role remains obscure, but if she marries an Italian the plot behind the plot will be revealed, and the family transpire to be involved in the Vatican P2 conspiracy. I can see it making a good board game.

How is it, I wonder, that the preservation of the countryside is so male a preoccupation? In the recent Save Our Countryside edition of the *Observer* Supplement, 38 men were mentioned and seven women, of these latter three were wives and daughters, one was a famous actress and another a famous writer — as if some kind of apology were needed for their presence. And in the last Common Ground anthology of rural reflections 10 men were featured to each woman. I am not complaining, merely observing.

○

Meanwhile the countryside continues to weather assault by pesticide and herbicide, we all cough rather a lot (why? why?), cruise missiles tour the country lanes and the banner headline in the local newspaper reads 'Narrow Escape for Vicar on Pedestrian Crossing'.

A Happy Christmas and a Merry New Year. Truly, these things are possible.

ROGER WODDIS

Today Chequers, tomorrow the world

'The opportunity to pick off the Russians, the Chinese and President Reagan in the space of a single week was clearly too tempting to miss.' — the Guardian *on Mrs Thatcher's round-the-world trip.*

It's so nice to go travelling
And flaunt my freedom to roam;
It's so nice to go travelling
And leave my headaches at home.

It's so nice for the cameras
To see me *soignée* and pearled;
It's so nice to go travelling
And put my stamp on the world.

I've had lunch with the Russian,
Who smiled as he took my hand;
As I said to his lady,
It's so nice to be overmanned.

When I've flown out to China
And signed the deal on Hong Kong,
I'll be off to see Ronnie
And tell him where he's gone wrong.

My idea of heaven
Is fifty-four hours in the air
(though what it does for the dole-queues
Is neither here nor there).

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RETURN OF THE OLD POLITICS

Next week India goes to the polls. Rajiv Gandhi has tried to ride the sympathy wave that followed the assassination of his mother. But will he succeed, asks Mihir Bose?

New Delhi

INDIAN ELECTIONS are won on 'waves' — or so goes conventional political analysis here. Thus the 1971 elections, when Mrs Gandhi promised to abolish poverty, was won on an 'Indira wave'; the 1972 nationwide state elections (held just after India had liberated Bangladesh from Pakistan) were won on the 'Bangladesh victory wave'; and in 1977, when Mrs Gandhi was herself trounced, was decided on an 'anti-emergency wave'.

For these elections the Congress Party has been hoping for a 'sympathy wave' — sympathy for the son struggling to fill the shoes of his dead mother. The problem for Rajiv Gandhi is that, like Bob Hawke in Australia, the election campaign may have gone on for too long for the sympathy wave to last. Like the Australians, the Indians have had rather too many recent elections. There is a noticeable lack of genuine excitement for this, the fifth major election in seven years. With Mrs Gandhi, the Congress may also have overdone the 'martyr factor'.

By the time the voting takes place next week, it will be almost two months since Mrs Gandhi's assassination. Already the dead prime minister is being seen as a distant, though good, legend. Legends are almost an Indian cottage industry and the Congress is discovering that like Mahatma Gandhi, the memory of Indira Gandhi's life and death produces a sense of awe, but not quite the political anger required to make people go out and vote for her son.

In an amazingly short time, the familiar Indian political considerations of caste and faction have re-asserted themselves. They surfaced almost as soon as Rajiv Gandhi sat down last month to finalise the list of Congress candidates for the election. The Indian electoral system is superficially similar to the one in Britain — single member parliamentary constituencies and a 'first past the post' formula for getting elected.

In the past this has produced governments in Delhi with large majorities elected on a minority of the popular vote. But MPs in India develop few of the constituency ties that are normal in the UK. 'Surgeries' are unknown and a popular joke runs that the locals always know when an election is due, because that is when they suddenly see their MP visiting the constituency.

It is rare for MPs to fight from the same constituency in two successive elections and the pre-election period sees them busily seeking more 'winnable' seats. But what adds to the uncertainty is the search for a 'ticket' — one of the more amazing 're-selection' processes undertaken by any political party.

In the few weeks between the time that an election is called and the actual filing of nomination papers, the political parties all select the candidates for the 500-odd constituencies. It is as if the Labour NEC and the Conservative Central Office were to decide all the candidates in a giant horse-trading session after a general election date had been set, instead of concentrating on policies and manifestos. Politicians crowd round the party offices, scrambling to get selected or to get the precious 'ticket'.

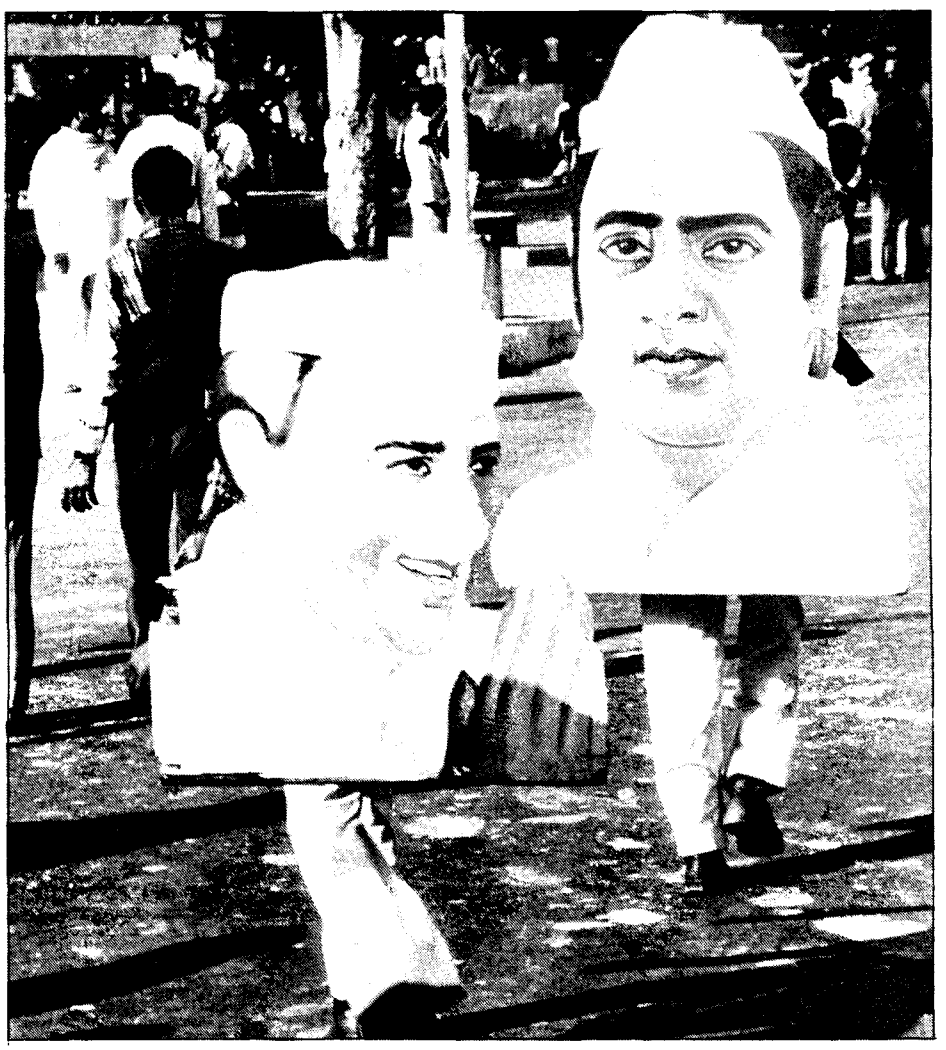
EVER SINCE MARCH, when there was some talk of an early election, the Congress Party has been buzzing with rumours about the sitting MPs who would be denied a 'ticket' by Rajiv Gandhi. As soon as the election was in fact called, Rajiv's special re-selection committee (consisting of his cousin Arun Nehru, his Doon School classmate Arun Singh and his political secretary Makhan Lal Fotedar) decided to remake the party in Rajiv's image.

The immediate target was the hundred or so MPs who had been given the ticket for the 1980 election by his brother Sanjay and whose loyalties were therefore suspect. The two Aruns and Fotedar thought particularly that the distribution of 'tickets' should reflect Rajiv's Mr Clean, rather business-like image.

Rajiv has not just been relying merely on his re-selection committee. A whole gamut of aids has been deployed to 'sell' the new prime minister.

Arun Nehru, who was chief executive of a well-known paint company, got the ad man who devised him a successful campaign to sell paint to plan the Congress's advertising blitz. (At one stage even Saatchi and Saatchi were being considered, but they appear to have failed to convince the Gandhis that they could repeat their Thatcher success here. If the ads are any guide, though, the local ad man has learnt the Saatchi and Saatchi techniques of half-truth rather well.)

The ads are meant to reach the 100 or so million who are literate and whose political



Andreas Mulas/Camera Press

Does the face fit? Rajiv Gandhi's followers canvassing outside government buildings in New Delhi in the run-up to the elections

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influence reaches far beyond their numbers. This minority, aspiring to get their share of the material goodies available in Gandhi's India (a result of its undoubted, if uneven, economic progress since independence) are supposed to be impressed with Rajiv's familiarity with computers. A small computer has even been installed at the prime minister's residence and is regularly fed with electoral data, including the vital facts about caste.

Though sceptics have dubbed it 'Computerji' — ji being a term of respect in India — Rajiv evidently relies on it and has a full-time staff monitoring it.

The 'horse' trading for tickets usually sees the local Congress leaders from the the individual states rushing to Delhi with their chosen 'lists' of candidates. Traditionally, local Congress Parties — or for that matter any political party in India — divide between the 'ministerial' wing (those who are ministers in the local governments) and the 'organisational' wing (those who run the local party machines).

IN MOST of the states Rajiv's re-selection caucus appears to have taken advantage of this traditional inter-Congress split to get their own men in, except for Rajiv's own crucial home state of Ultar Pradesh, which sends 85 MPs to Delhi and has provided all but one of India's prime ministers. Here the 'organisational' and 'ministerial' wings — who normally barely speak to each other — seem to have decided that they could not afford to bicker and let Rajiv's men pick them off. They humoured Rajiv's ego by suggesting that perhaps he should contest more than one seat, in order to make completely sure he did get elected. The idea behind this ploy was that Rajiv would contest two seats and win them both. There would then have to be a by-election, which would provide fresh opportunities for horse-trading.

All the signs are that even if Rajiv Gandhi gets his expected majority — the latest prediction is 366 out of the 511 seats — the Congress horse-trade will intensify, rather than decrease. For one result of Rajiv's re-selection process has been the rise of the Congress 'dissidents' — those denied a 'ticket' and determined to prove the re-selection caucus and 'Computerji' wrong. Some of the dissidents are quite well-known, including the former Maharastra chief minister, Abdul Rahman Antulay, who lost office when the High Court judged him to be a most 'corrupt' man.

If denying Antulay a 'ticket' for these elections was good for Rajiv's Mr Clean image, some of the other dissidents promise to cause him headaches. In his own state of UP a ticket was given to the daughter-in-law of the acting Congress president Tripathi, but not to his son. As a result Tripathi Jnr has decided to challenge the Indian education minister by standing against her for the prestigious Lucknow seat — and he could win.

The Tripathi family claims unrivalled service to four generations of Nehrus, but such acts of 'dissidence' are part of Congress tradition and may do Tripathi Jnr no harm politically.

But in many constituencies Rajiv's men are finding that they face a tougher fight against dissident candidates from within the Congress than from the opposition. Here neither Saatchi and Saatchi-style ads nor Computerji are much help. □

MINERS' STRIKE

LE CRUNCH FOR MRS T

Denis MacShane on inter-national reactions to the strike

Geneva

IT WAS ONE of the strangest public meetings Geneva had seen in years. Crammed into a sweaty hall last Friday, about a mile from the banking centre of Calvin's refuge and Rousseau's birthplace, were hundreds of Swiss citizens hanging onto every word of the three strange visitors sitting in front of them.

Steven Spielberg's *Gremlins* has just opened to huge Christmas crowds, but three people from Yorkshire were as far removed from Swiss consciousness as a Mogwai, ET, or any of Hollywood's creations.

In a country which hasn't seen a serious strike in half a century and where public policy is aimed at consensus, full employment, a high standard of living and planned growth, the words of Margaret Coulson, Sheena Stapleton and Peter Kitchin, all from Upton in West Yorkshire, could have been coming from the dark side of the moon.

They spoke simply and plainly about the privations suffered in mining communities. To a woman who asked smugly why the British government had not been overthrown as a result of the strike, Margaret Coulson replied: 'We're not trying to overthrow the government. We're fighting to save our jobs'

They referred freely to 'scabs' — that sharp Anglo-Saxon epithet coming over poorly in French as 'travailleur jaune' and described what they had seen with their own eyes of police behaviour.

A doughty old English lady who raised the question of violence against working miners was put down with cheers by a balding 'soixante-huitarde', who snarled about the brutality of 'les flics de Madame Thatcher'. Whatever else is the result of the strike, the television portrayal in most West European countries of British police in action against the miners means that the century-old image of 'le bobby et son fair-play' is forever dead.

In fact, the international image of Britain has suffered immensely because of the miners' strike. The irony is that the very failure of the strike to disrupt the country means that it is no longer seen abroad as a case of a democratic government standing up against overweening trade union strength, but as a mixture of incompetence and repression that should have been settled long ago. Workers from a pillar of the western democratic community are afforded the same kind of reception as they travel around Europe as are labour's representatives from Pinochet's Chile, Botha's South Africa or Jaruzelski's Poland.

Even the Mayor of Geneva was tucked away discreetly in a corner, leaving diplomatically before someone proposed that Geneva twin itself with Doncaster, or some other strike-hit town.

Britain has become a far-away country to which one sends charity and looks upon with pity from the richer corners of Europe. The Genevan citizens did not quite know what to make of the strike. The vicissitudes of the British labour movement's arguments over the NUM's tactics or the Labour Party leadership's equivocation are lost outside Britain.

Questions about Scargill's relationship with the Soviet Union or his lack of support for the Polish miners in Solidarity were turned away by the three Britons with the remarks: 'Those are questions for a top official. We are only representing our people'.

The Swiss nodded sagely in agreement as if to say 'Quite right. There are some areas the preserve of high functionaries and others that belong to ordinary folk'.

Most of the questions were directed to the two women about how they fed their children, whether they faced eviction, what they would do to celebrate Christmas. Geneva holds many meetings for political refugees from Third World countries, but the discussions then tend to be about high politics, imperialism, multinationals and the like. Here there was open fascination about daily survival in the pit communities of northern England.

As they left, the Swiss pressed 100 franc notes — worth about £33 — into the hands of Margaret and Sheena. Small change in Geneva, a lifeline in Upton.

Naturally there were no representatives of the massive British diplomatic community in Geneva present at the meeting. Yet more of the Swiss general public turned up to hear the miners' wives speak than attended upon Mrs Thatcher in her last official visit to Geneva. As Margaret, Sheena and Peter set off on their tour of the rest of the country, they will attract the interest of and meet with many more Swiss than did the Queen, when she came here four years ago on a State Visit.

Similar scenes can be reported from France, West Germany, Italy and the Nordic countries. Part of the received image of Britishness in the rest of Europe's eyes has been radically altered by the words of women who tell quietly and directly what life is like in part of today's England. □

This England

£3 book tokens for entries printed. (On postcards, please.)

□Not everyone was excited by Michael Heseltine's visit to Sandhurst last week. Some members of the Army College staff were, quite literally, hopping mad. They had been forbidden to use their lavatory for a week prior to the Defence Secretary's visit, so it could be cleaned up for his personal use. — *Observer* (Harriet Shackman)

□A disused public lavatory at Bull Green, Halifax, is to be reopened as a wine bar and bistro if the licensing magistrates approve. Mr David Lovell, who hopes his customers will be able to pass a pleasant evening in the premises, has received planning permission for the conversion from Calderdale metropolitan council. He wants to retain three of the handsome urinal stalls for use as well as ornament and to upholster about 12 lavatory pedestals so that customers may sit in a quiet corner of the bar, enthroned in contemplation of the distinguished sanitary history of Halifax. — *Guardian* (Margaret Rogers)

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TORTURE ROUTINES

Systematic torture has become part of the South African police and penal system. Denis Herbstein reviews the latest evidence

AS THE TEMPERATURE of South African life rises to one of its periodic boiling points, the number of political detentions increases correspondingly and could now be in the region of 200. Special Branch policemen will be hard at work 'interrogating' trade unionists, students, black politicians and other opponents of apartheid. As in the past, many of them will be beaten and/or kept awake for days until they 'confess'; some will need psychiatric treatment; and one or two may even die as a result of their experience.

The Detainees' Parents Support Committee, similar to the Argentine *desaparacidos* family watchdog, took sworn statements from 70 detainees who had been maltreated. The list of interrogators included scores of security policemen, among them at least 20 commissioned officers up to the rank of major. Many names were repeated. One of them, Capt Andries Struwig of John Vorster Square security headquarters in Johannesburg, was named in an appeal by a former black detainee, a man called Linda Mogale. The appeal judges accepted evidence that the captain, angered when Mogale denied culpability, grabbed him round the throat, banged his head against a wall and assaulted him until he 'confessed' to arson and terrorist activities.

Struwig was not disciplined. On the contrary, he was part of the team which later tortured Dr Neil Aggett, the white trade unionist, to his suicide, and whose name cropped up yet again in October when Auret van Heerden sued — unsuccessfully — 10 security policemen for torture (electric shock, suffocation with a canvas bag, strangulation with a wet towel, and being made to stand for hours with his wrists manacled to an ankle).

Then there is Warrant Officer Lawrence Prince, mentioned by van Heerden, Barbara Hogan, Dr Liz Floyd, the Methodist minister Cedric Mayson, and Prema Naidoo, whose affidavit recalls: 'After lunch, without any sort of provocation (Prince) pushed me onto the floor and . . . put his foot on the handcuffs so that they dug into my wrist and ankle. He then struck me under my feet with a piece of wood which had a key tied to it (he was naked) . . . Prince did not ask me any questions.'

Mention should also be made of the infamous 'Spyker' ('nail' in Afrikaans) van Wyk who 20 years ago was the hard man in the questioning of Alan Brooks and Stephanie Kemp (Sachs) in Cape Town. Though Ms Kemp received a £500 payment from the Minister of Justice (the pretence has gone, he is now Minister of Law and Order), van Wyk lingers on. In 1974, he's at Kompol security headquarters in Pretoria, hitting Brigitte Mabandla over the head with a stick; two years later, now in the Eastern Cape, one of a team whose brutal methods led to the prison suicide of Mapetla Mohapi; three years ago in Johannesburg roughing up Cedric Mayson.

Proving cruel treatment is extremely difficult. Detainees are held incommunicado for as long as a senior policemen deems fit. Often the bruised and broken, who have made a statement or are irrefutably innocent, may be held until their bodies have healed, and only then released or charged in court. Mogale could obtain no redress because there was a six month limit after which victims of torture could not initiate proceedings — and he had been held for seven months.

A plaintiff, by the very nature of his experiences, deprived of sleep (in one case) for 62 hours, hooded, naked, perhaps hung by the feet from a ten-storey window or having had electric shocks to his penis and testicles, will be confused about his nightmare, and not easily able to prove his case against a battery of security policemen with well rehearsed answers. Once in court he will know that, to many members of the South African bench, the word of a policeman is sacrosanct. (A recent recruit to the Pretoria Bar is former Lieutenant Johan van Aswegen, one of the successful defendants in the Auret van Heerden case.)

WHILE SOME of those held without trial have been involved in attempts to overthrow apartheid by force, the large majority are innocent by even the harsh standards of South African law. Figures collated by the parents' committee show that of the 572 people held under no-trial laws during the first eight months of this year, 189 had been released without charge, another 149 had been charged and acquitted, 122 were still detained, 106 were awaiting trial, one had hanged himself and only four had been convicted.

In 1982, the minister of law and order issued a set of guidelines on the treatment of prisoners held under the most notorious of the detention clauses, sec. 29(i) of the Internal Security Act. As a code of conduct it has proved ineffective and must have produced mirthful guffaws on the upper storeys of John Vorster Square. 'A detainee shall at all times be treated in a humane manner with proper regard to the rules of decency and should not in any way be assaulted' . . . 'should be afforded ample opportunity to sleep and to do physical exercise' . . . 'the services of chaplains of the South African Police, the South African Defence Force and the Prison Service shall be obtained on request', . . . 'all reasonable steps should be taken to prevent a detainee from injuring himself . . .'

The officer who shot a book salesman, Pares Malatje, through his forehead at point blank range last year appears to have contravened the directive that 'members of the Force . . . may not take firearms into the room in which the interrogation takes place, unless there are compelling security reasons for doing so.' (Police inquiries are continuing.)

In the last two decades over 60 detainees have died (not forgetting some 300 ordinary criminal suspects who perished in police hands in a three year period). In some cases, there was not even an inquest, but the cause of death for at least one third was 'suicide by hanging'. Some 'jumped through a 10-storey window', one simply 'fell on a chair.'

Is it naive to expect that official brutality can be checked, given the rising tide of black frustration and the frightened white reaction? Certainly, determined lawyers have brought torture into the open. There are signs, too, that the authorities are worried about the nasty publicity, both in the local and foreign media. This year a Pan-African Congress man who had been captured red-handed carrying weapons across the border walked out of the Johannesburg supreme court scot-free. In legal circles it was said that his interrogators had been so rough that the 'confession' which it elicited could not be relied on. The prosecution feared the police witness would not be believed.

The code of conduct set up the office of Inspector of Detainees, who would pop into prisons and police stations unannounced to check on the well-being of the inhabitants. One called on the late Neil Aggett, but unfortunately he was out, being tortured. Prema Naidoo was

DON'T VAT THE PRESS

There are strong reasons to believe the Chancellor of the Exchequer is planning to impose VAT on magazines. Such a move would turn the clock back 130 years — the last tax on newspapers and journals was repealed in 1855. Since then 'No tax on knowledge' has been a principle agreed by all Governments, even in the darkest days of war.

A free Press is a tax-free Press.

No Government should be given the power to impose financial pressure on a Press it may not like.

Tell your MP to say 'NO' to any tax on reading.

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simply too terrified to tell the inspector about his ordeal.

Nor do the prison doctors usually offer protection to the detainees. Dr Benjamin Tucker, the district surgeon who failed to recognise brain damage in Steve Biko seven years ago, is still around. In a trial now ending in Port Elizabeth, he admitted that he had failed to carry out a full examination of two assaulted detainees whom he had visited.

All this is done in the name of preserving white western values. Sic. □

UNITED STATES

RETRIAL OF HISTORY

In 1982, CBS broadcast a documentary claiming General Westmoreland, military commander in Vietnam, had manipulated figures on the strength of the enemy to show that the US was winning the war. Westmoreland sued for libel and many expected the trial would be an inquest on the war. In fact, as Karen Rothmyer reports after the first stage of the trial, it is becoming something completely different

RETIRED GENERAL William Westmoreland was asked recently during the libel trial what his reaction had been to a cable he'd received in 1967. The cable, from the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff — the United States' top military body — referred to a story in the *New York Times* on Westmoreland's request for more troops. His request, suggested the story, indicated the general's failure to turn the tide in America's favour.

'I didn't pay any attention to it,' Westmoreland told David Boies, the Wall Street lawyer who is defending CBS in the $120-million case. 'Mr Boies, you have to realise that every time something showed up in the *New York Times* we'd get a cable from Washington saying, "What's all this about? What's all that about?" It took up an inordinate amount of my time.'

Westmoreland's answer reflects one of the major realities of the war in Vietnam that is now being replayed, in part, in an overheated Manhattan courtroom: Vietnam was a war fought with one eye on Hanoi and one eye on the American media. Repeatedly during the trial lawyers for both sides have produced documents and elicited testimony showing the extent to which American officials took press reaction into account when making their decisions.

Originally, it had been thought that the trial, which began in October and is expected to go until February, would provide a forum for the re-examination of virtually every aspect of American policy in Vietnam. This has not been the case, thanks in part to the CBS documentary itself, which focused on one issue — whether or not Westmoreland was guilty of deceit. Indeed, Sam Adams, the CIA analyst who served as the whistle-blower in CBS's version of events, says that for his part he hopes to return to the CIA after this whole episode is over. In the same vein, references by witnesses to the fact that the South Vietnamese — who supposedly were being prepared under Westmoreland to take over their own war — were not even permitted to review some of the intelligence information available to the Americans have passed without comment from either side.

This lack of a wider canvas in the trial has been a disappointment. But listening to recollections of events that took place nearly two decades ago — recollections which lose their precision the moment the dicussion veers away from well-reviewed specifics — one gets the feeling that, in fact, the war is now just too long ago to allow for any startling new revelations. Those with something to say have already said their pieces; to see Robert Kennedy's face come up now on the video monitors that dot the courtroom is not to recall afresh the bitter conflicts of the war years, but rather to sense the presence of ghosts.

It's hard at this point to say which side will ultimately prevail in the suit, in which Westmoreland is being represented by one of a dozen or so conservative law firms that have sprung up in the past few years with financial assistance from major New Right supporters. (Many of these same supporters also have been funding academic and other efforts to revise the history of the Vietnam war either to show that the US didn't lose or to show that whatever problems there were stemmed from weak support at home. One reporter at the trial says he thinks the most significant effect of a Westmoreland victory would be the boost it would give to these efforts.)

WESTMORELAND has several factors in his favour. He benefits from the public's fading memories of Vietnam — only a couple of members of the initial panel of 18 prospective jurors said they had heard of Robert McNamara, Secretary of Defense during the key Vietnam years, and only one had watched the multi-part television series on Vietnam broadcast in Europe and the US. He also enjoys the status of an aggrieved party against a wealthy and powerful giant. While most prospective jurors reported no particular feelings toward the media, American juries have been increasingly finding for plaintiffs against major media outlets. One recent study found that plaintiffs currently win about 80 per cent of the libel cases that go to trial. This could reflect a public feeling that news organisations are as likely as other big institutions to ride roughshod over individual rights — and are as likely to be able to pay for it.

Probably the major factor going against Westmoreland is his status as a public figure. As such, under American libel law, he must prove not just that CBS was wrong, but that it did not exercise proper care or journalistic impartiality in preparing the programme. Even if he should win at the jury level — which several CBS officials have hinted they think likely — appeals judges (who currently overturn more than half of the libel awards made by juries) could be expected to look closely at the technical legal grounds involved. Such a review, however, would take place in the context of an increased judicial willingness to allow public officials to sue in the first place, after years of relatively unchallenged press freedom.

Westmoreland himself, with his white hair and country Southern style, has proven a surprisingly effective witness to those who remember him during the war as the bemedalled, ramrod-straight military man. A number of other high government and military officials who have testified on his behalf have not come off as well, often claiming failing memories at key points or seeming to talk down to lesser mortals.

CBS, when it begins its own case, is expected by contrast to produce some of the lower ranking officers who appeared on the original show, telling, often movingly, of their small parts in what they regarded then and now as a manipulation of the truth. CBS also plans to call enlisted men who stepped on land mines or other devices prepared by unofficial combatants whom Westmoreland's staff decided to expunge from enemy strength totals in 1967 when there was great pressure from Washington to show success.

Discussion of that decision, including accounts of arguments between various intelligence bodies and comments on press reaction, has provided some of the most interesting insights of the trial. One of the most telling documents, which the CBS defence has made much of, is a 1967 cable drafted by Westmoreland's deputy, with Westmoreland's agreement. It deals with the issue of whether the so-called self-defence and secret self-defence forces should continue to be included in overall enemy strength figures. The cable, addressed to the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and to the Pacific commander, notes that if these self-defence forces continue to be included, the total enemy strength figure would show a sharp increase. The cable goes on: 'We have been projecting an image of success over recent months, and properly so. Now ... the newsmen will immediately seize on the point that the enemy forces have increased about 120-130,000. All available caveats and explanations will not prevent the press from drawing an erroneous and gloomy conclusion as to the meaning of the increase. All those who have an incorrect view of the war will be re-enforced (sic) and the task will become more difficult.'

In the end, the decision was to remove the self-defence forces, which Westmoreland and others have repeatedly stated at the trial were not a significant military group. Now, with Westmoreland's case relating to his actions in Vietnam complete, the spotlight will move to CBS and what many expect to be a highly revealing look at the inner workings of one of America's major news organisations.

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LETTERS

New Left groupings

Ben Fine, Dept of Economics, Birkbeck College

In her article, 'The Left Realigns' (*NS* 30 November), Sarah Benton ties together two different matters, realignment on the Left with particular reference to the differences within the Communist Party and an assessment of the pamphlet 'Class Politics: an Answer to its Critics' of which I am one of the authors. By doing so, she seriously distorts an understanding of each.

To begin with the Left, an 'axis' is conjured into existence consisting of 'the erstwhile "Stalinists" of the Communist Party, various groupings from the old Trotskyist Left... and Labour's traditional fundamentalist Left, including Tony Benn and the group around *Labour Herald*' and 'two other party factions, a tiny group round a paper called *The Leninist* and a larger group, with stronger roots outside London and in the Labour Party, round *Straight Left*'.

The notion of such an axis would, I imagine, be met as much with amusement as contempt by many of those supposedly involved, such is the degree of fragmentation on the Left. But the significant point is that such unity is to be welcomed for the policies which it wishes to pursue — such as at the CND conference in laying full blame on the USA for the arms race. By treating such politics as factional activity of 'hardliners', 'fundamentalists' etc, the views involved need not be considered. They are simply contrasted with 'the sorts of cultural and psychoanalytical critiques being produced inside the women's movement and outside it by intellectuals like Stuart Hall'. No softliners, wets or eclectics here, just critiques and intellectuals!

This is, to turn to the pamphlet, the height of irony since it is exactly the response that was anticipated — that 'our coherent theoretical lead' will be seen as a dogma in which 'it is not at all clear... what fundamental changes they accept have taken place'. Can this really be true of a pamphlet which specifically stresses the importance of the 'new forces', which everybody must recognise? But the point we take up is not their existence but their relation to classes.

Nor do we, to mention the example given, 'draw little significance from the changed formation of Western societies, in particular the decline in the size and character of manual working class jobs'. We draw attention to the crucial impact of the unionisation and politicised industrial action of white-collar unions.

The pamphlet was addressed to a wide audience for debate. In any circumstances, it would be disturbing for it to be perceived more in terms of support for an imaginary axis, the better to ignore what is actually said. At a time when the CPGB leadership is suspending its members for alleged factional activity and malpractices, it is all too easy for those on the sidelines to stir up those in the middle to seek organisational rather than political analyses and solutions. Let us hope they do not win the day.

History and the Punjab

Sushma Lal, Manchester

I am at a loss to understand the point of Uma Ram Nath's so-called Feedback (*NS* 30 November). It seems little more than a repetition of points made in Amrit Wilson's article (*NS* 16 November) with added elaboration of some trivalities.

Uma Ram Nath begins by calling Amrit Wilson's article ill-substantiated and unconnected with the history of Punjab, whereas all Ms Ram Nath has to say in this respect is that there has been no Left movement in Punjab as in Bengal. This I find not only a display of utter ignorance of Punjabi history but an insult to the people of Punjab.

Unlike Mrs Ram Nath, many even in the west have heard of Bhagat Singh, the inspiring leader, and now a symbol, of the pre-independence revolutionary movement in India. It is equally wrong to deny (or not to know) that there was a Naxalite movement in Punjab — the once-influential Punjab Communist Revolutionary Committee was only the most important of several.

Finally, Uma Ram Nath wishes to see Punjab living in harmony but an analysis like hers, which ignores the connection between class struggle and religious conflict, will not lead very far towards that goal.

A dud?

Jim Mulligan, Head of English Dept., Pimlico Comprehensive School

When a critic (*NS* 7 December) praises a Craig Raine poem because 'it can't be fully understood by an effort of the intellect', I begin to suspect the intellect of the critic. When he then asserts that 'to try to say what the poem is about is absurd', I start looking to see who John Lucas is. Head of English at Loughborough University. Really?

I find such phrases as 'it's about different urgencies of the imagination' and 'it is also an entire and seamless creation' unhelpful. I wouldn't dare utter such nonsense to the people I teach.

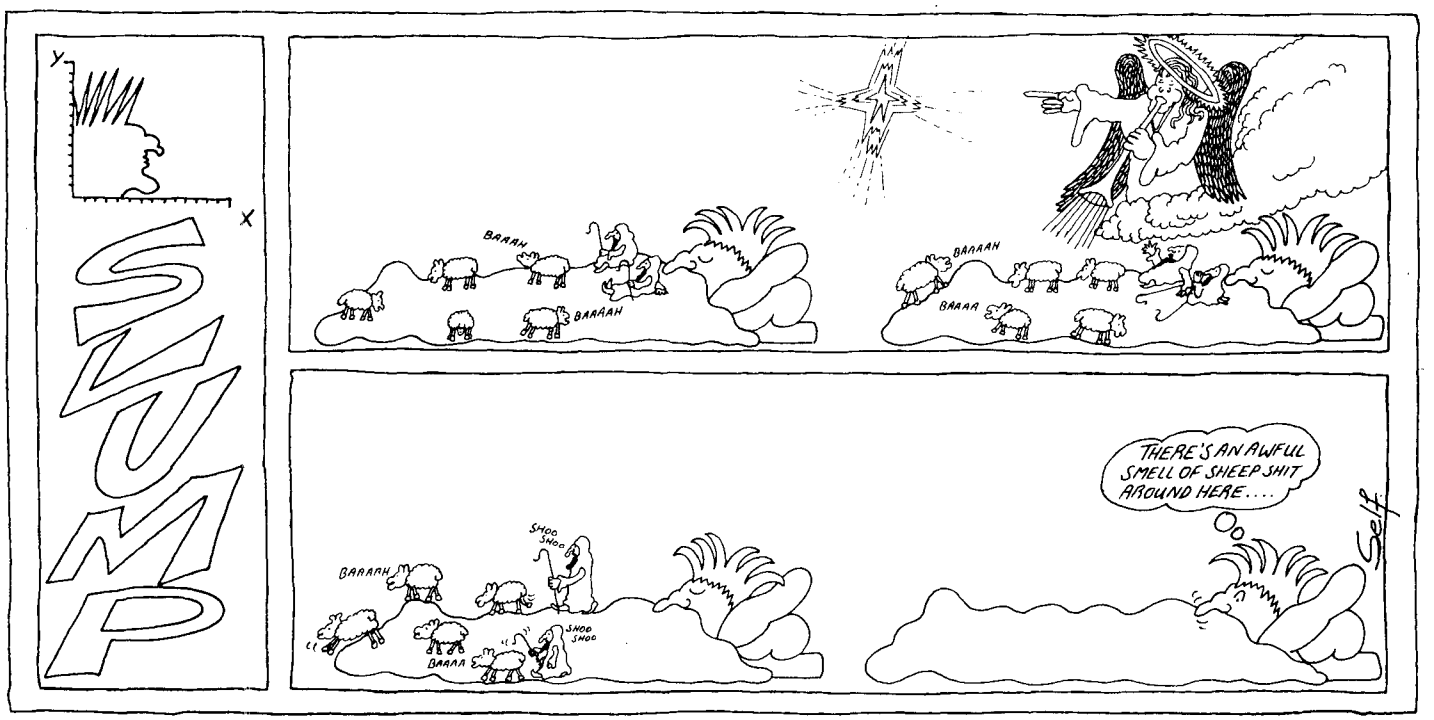
However, as a result of the review, I re-read the poem and decided that John Lucas is indeed right; the poem can't be understood. And, furthermore, all my English teaching colleagues agreed. That's fair enough. You expect a couple of duds in any book of poetry and, as a reader of Craig Raine, I'm prepared to put up with them. But what I don't want is pretentious rubbish masquerading as criticism from the Head of an English Department who should know better.

Freudian slip-up

Clement Freud MP, House of Commons

Your Miscellany column (*NS* 7 December) reported what it chose to call my and my Party's uninterest in the subject of student grants. Your readers may like to know that this is a very long way from the truth.

On the day in question I was hosting a fundraising lunch for the Down's Children's Association, of which I am Patron, but *18 per cent of my Party took an active part in that Question Time.* I spoke on the subject of student grants at a public meeting in Enfield and on the BBC *Today* programme. ▷



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The Liberal Party has set up its own commission to look into the whole area of student finance and I suspect that, unlike the government, our study will be guided by the principle of open access and equality of opportunity — the principles we most fear to be under attack at the present time.

Local council election results

D.E. Spilsbury, West Midlands County Labour Party

Peter Kellner's latest analysis of local election results (*NS* 7 December) demonstrates the problems which may arise from drawing conclusions from small samples without examining details.

He says that the Coventry SW by-election of 8 November constituted one-sixth of the 'three-cornered' votes cast. Quite correctly, he refers to it as a crucial constituency, being Audrey Wise's former seat. Fortunately, the actual contest does not justify the straightforward 4 per cent swing to the Tories which he has calculated, not merely because the electorate is different from in 1983, but also because of the type of election involved.

Coventry SW was a by-election for a vacancy on the West Midlands County Council on boundaries which were abolished in 1983, both for City and Parliamentary seats. Electors who had voted in Coventry NW or SE at the General Election in 1983 found themselves asked to vote in Coventry SW in 1984. Confusion was not surprising. What is more, not only have the national and local press done their best to rubbish the metropolitan county councils over the last few years, but the (Labour) Coventry City Council has undermined the role of the WMCC on a number of occasions. Abolition has been welcomed in the mistaken belief that Coventry would go back to running services as it did in the 1950s.

In that situation, franchise confusion and a by-election for a locally unpopular council, turn-outs as low as 10-12 per cent in strong Labour-supporting areas were not all that surprising. The Tories turned out more of their reliables on a stale register and we suffered from the 'what does it matter?' reaction of our usually reliable voters. Even the GLC suffered from this effect in the much publicised September by-elections and we could not hope to turn the Coventry SW by-election into a referendum on Tory anti-democracy.

I would suggest to Peter Kellner that he might consider excluding metropolitan county council by-elections generally from his analyses, so as not to extrapolate from an unrepresentative statistical base.

Islamicisation in Pakistan

Qutubuddin Aziz, Minister (Information), Embassy of Pakistan

Amrit Wilson's article on Pakistani women and Islamicisation in Pakistan (*NS* 7 December) contains many baseless allegations.

First, four reliable male witnesses are needed for proving adultery, not rape. In rape cases, the courts almost wholly depend on the testimony of the aggrieved woman and circumstantial evidence. Men convicted of rape are given exemplary punishment, including flogging in public when the victim is a girl of tender age. Deterrent punishment has reduced the incidence of rape.

Second, the recently enacted Evidence Law does not discriminate against women, and their testimony in law courts continues to be on a par with those of men. Only for *attesting* certain financial documents, two men *or* one man and two women should sign as witnesses. Women have full freedom to enter into financial or business transactions on their own.

Third, the allegation that there are thousands of political prisoners in Pakistan is utterly false. There are very few political detainees. Criminals belonging to the Kabul-based terrorist group, *Al Zulfikar*, who committed acts of sabotage, murder and robbery in Pakistan, are serving jail sentences awarded to them by law courts. No political prisoner has been tortured.

Fourth, Muslims in the Armed Forces follow the prohibition law strictly and do not drink.

Fifth, the punishment awarded by a lower court to a blind girl for adultery two years ago was set aside by the higher *Shariah* Court and she was acquitted.

Sixth, the claim that Pakistan is in the throes of a dire economic and political situation is not borne out by facts. Economically, Pakistan was never so well off as it is now. The growth rate of the Pakistani economy in the past five years has been the highest in South Asia and so is our per capita income. In the past seven years, Pakistan has enjoyed peace and stability.

FEEDBACK

A consensus on incomes

THE GREAT Moving Right Show continues. Latest to enter the lists is Doug Jones (*NS* 7 December), who attempts, doubtless in the name of 'new realism', to revive the discredited nostrum of incomes policy — disregarding, in true 'realist' fashion, the irrefutable fact, that no party with incomes policy in its platform has won an election since 1945.

The reason can be understood by a close examination of how Jones goes about standing on his head. The ground is prepared by a tired piece of demagogy, in which Tory policies and their catastrophic impact on working-class living standards are declared to have happened 'under free collective bargaining'. They happened under universal suffrage too — is that an argument for Stalinism or fascism? Or maybe against liberty of conscience?

Amazingly, no cause of inflation other than wage costs is mentioned — and no remedy for inflation other than incomes policy. Nor is there any analysis of why all previous experiments in incomes policy by Labour governments have ended in disaster, and in the return of the Tories. The reason is simple. For working people, in an unplanned economy, to give up their only direct influence over their living standards — through trade union action — is to court disaster. When these policies are adopted at the urging of Labour and trade union leaders, in return for pledges of 'planning all round' which have never been delivered, the result is disillusion.

Jones allows some inkling of these truths to penetrate his fantasy world when he asks: 'Why should workers want to help to build profits rather than bolster their wages?', and points out that under Thatcher profits have risen while investment stays low and unemployment rises. The obvious remedy is for working people to control their industries, and for investment decisions to be planned. This is obviously too strong for Jones, but he does allow himself some trendy 'participatory' thoughts about plan agreements, industrial democracy, rights to information, profit sharing, and co-operatives.

In an unspecified and mystifying way, these worthy things are supposed to amount (by the inevitability of gradualness?) to a 'planned incomes policy that is linked to other aspects of planning' (gosh!) while 'at the same time being based primarily on incentives and self-interest rather than sanctions and self-restraint'. That 'primarily' imparts a delicate, if subtle, act of adverbial altruism.

But let us be charitable. Jones no doubt means this vague and meagre fare to amount to a socialist 'quid pro quo' for wage restraint under capitalism. But just in case this red rabble-rousing might go to anyone's head, we are wisely cautioned four paragraphs later that 'We must recognise that socialism will not be delivered the day after the election...'

In case anyone has missed the point of this breathtaking platitude, we are informed in the rest of the sentence that 'we cannot wait for an ideal world before we devise a policy for incomes'. And there you have it. From incomes policy as a component part of what (charitably and inaccurately!) could just be described as an (incredibly anaemic) vision of socialism, we are transported, in four paragraphs of meandering observations on new technology, taxation, and other journalistic equivalents of the conjurer's handkerchief and top hat, to the very different proposition of incomes policy today, and socialism tomorrow if you're lucky. Which you never are.

The reason is plain. Incomes policy in a market economy has never ended up as anything other than wage restraint. And it never will. The idea that it must precede any serious reduction in unemployment is just a fancy 'left' version of the Thatcherite monetarist doctrine that 'workers must price themselves back into jobs'. The end result has always been that Labour governments which tread this road only bite into the grass-roots base which they need to carry out any serious radical social change.

The only way to build a 'consensus' on incomes is to act to control the 'commanding heights' — not by creating 101 new versions of the National Coal Board, but by taking prompt action to control the banks, the financial institutions, and foreign trade. Shop-floor workers must be the eyes and ears of any policy of economic recovery, to guard against sabotage by employers resentful of socialist controls and egalitarian redistribution. Their enthusiasm for this key role will not be increased by moralising strictures on wage restraint.

Co-operatives, local enterprise boards, increased employee rights to information, widening of collective bargaining, enterprise plans — all these are vital, and we at the GLC have done more than most to develop all of these and a few more. But without swift measures to control the financial system and take powers to direct investment, these will simply be the 'participatory' icing on a traditional Keynesian-corporatist right-wing Labour capitalist cake — leading, as it always has done, to collapse and the return of an even more vicious Tory government.

The task of the Labour Party *now* is to convince working people that its economic programmes have any relevance whatever to their lives. To play the old, old tune of wage restraint first and jam — if ever — tomorrow does nothing to advance that task.

Michael Ward

Michael Ward chairs the Industry & Employment Committee at the GLC.

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THE SEVEN TRAUMAS OF THE WORD-BOX

Our diarist, Islander, has asked and been allowed to tell you about his love affair

READERS OF MY FORTNIGHTLY diary have missed my word-box recently. I have hardly referred to it at all. Now any anguish is over. As a special Christmas bonus, I can entertain you at length with the delights and frights of writing with a computer.

A year ago I was concerned that your average addict of the *New States!*!* (as we call it) wouldn't know the difference between hardware and software. It no longer worries me. So swift has been the incoming tide of the 'information revolution' that I can presume, as I write this, that readers understand such a crucial, if elementary, distinction. But if you don't there is no need to worry, you will soon enough . . .

Anyway, it's impossible to describe the difference to someone who's never seen a floppy disc put into a micro — as impossible as describing how to drive in a screw with a screwdriver to someone who has seen neither. Which brings me straightaway to language and computers, one of the Seven Traumas of getting a word-box. Each, it seems, essential to the subsequent enjoyment of life after the typewriter.

There are many things for which you can use computers. I have just got a WS 2000 *Minor Miracle* modem, which lets me telephone copy to other computers, sign on to micro bulletin boards and to Prestel — so I can now call up the headlines any time I like. When I first got my micro, an Osborne 01 — which is the primitive Volkswagen or Deux Chevaux of small personal computers — I put a 'cash flow' on it using an 'electronic spread sheet'. Because the memory is instructed to hold all the totals as formula, each time you change a simple input every one of the sums is recalculated, which saves a tremendous amount of drudgery.

But I really bought my Osborne to write with — for use as a word-box — I much prefer the English expression to the American notion that words are to be 'processed' like junk food. Now, although they are called personal computers, the machines are manufactured primarily for businesses. Naturally, the activity of the freelance in Grub Street receives scant sympathy. Yet the demands writers make of the technology, in terms of the length of files, the intensity of editing and the quality of printing, is considerable. In his book *The Writer and the Word Processor* (a Coronet book with a foreword by Len Deighton, published last month) Ray Hammond states: 'Writers provide the hardest test for any word processing system'. So if you are thinking of getting one to write with, stand tall when you go to a dealer and ask for a demonstration.

Go in hope, to sign on to the magical loopiness of toggles and word wraps. But remember that, as in every fairy story (or Christmas pantomime for that matter, if your loved ones have decided that they don't want to see you between Boxing Day and the New Year), there are ritual ordeals to survive — and even a touch of terror, before you get to the Palace of Pleasure. This way, then, for the Seven Traumas.

First Trauma: the decision to buy

It can be instantaneous, or it can creep up on you unawares. Often it occurs after you have used someone's else's word-box and you realize how easy, and gripping it is. Kzam! Even the toughest quill pushers have been known to snap. After that, every time you scratch out an error, or Tipp-Ex one over, you think: 'I needn't be doing this, I'm old fashioned'. Then it's: 'I'm obsolete' — swiftly followed by: 'I'm going to be a failure if I don't'. The moment you feel the slightest bit guilty because you haven't bought a word-box, it is all over. My advice is: immediate surrender. Resistance only makes the crucifixion worse. Not only for you: others are victimized much more. The time when people are most utterly boring, obsessive and intolerable about the subject is when they want to buy but before they have. Get it over with!

Second Trauma: what to spend on what

Prices are falling by about 30 per cent a

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year. Cheap machines are getting much cheaper. Good machines for between £1,000 to £1,500 are getting much better for the price. The fluidity of the market makes acquisition an agony; another reason for getting it over with. The Sanyo is 'IBM compatible', includes *Wordstar* and is very good value, but it does not have the big disc capacity for writing books or holding massive files and its screen is poor. Never work with anything that doesn't have a rock-steady glare-free screen. The Olivetti looks great, but is pricey and includes no software. Nor does the IBM, which is even more expensive and not so good. The most fashionable is the Apricot with its neat little Sony disks. Some friends of mine formed a consortium and pushed down the price of theirs with a collection bargain, each saving some hundreds of pounds. The only definite advice is: don't buy IBM, unless you're in Nicaragua when politics comes first. Go for reliability, a large memory, a low price and good software. Remember that what you look at is the screen and what you work with is the software, the actual text editor.

In addition, what you read is what you print. So buying is a double trauma. The very fast printers use 'dot matrix', which leaves a horrible *pointillist* impression, as if one was reading the dictation of a ghost. This has given computers a bad name. One of the reasons I decided to buy 18 months ago was that reliable and relatively less pricey 'daisy wheel' printers had come onto the market. A daisy wheel gives a proper typewritten impression. A Juki, for example, now costs £350 or less. It is slow (18 characters a second) and noisy by office standards, but it's OK for a solitary writer. The printer *is* important, because a word-box allows you to read and correct on paper. This is much easier on the eye, and gives a much better feel for the sense, than reading and correcting on screen. Changes are easily inserted and the text prints out again while you have coffee (if it's a short article), or lunch (if it's longer). If, like me, you love to change and 'correct' what you write, then this is the true gift of the electronic key board. You can print out something three or five times, with little effort and without putting in those new mistakes which are one of the bugbears of typing. Hence the true justification of these devices — they let you intensify your craft.

Third Trauma: the dealer

If you buy a car, you expect your dealer to know how to drive it. But computer salespeople, like almost everyone in computers, are somewhat crazy. Due to the rate of change, it's as if they are on speed. At any rate, they don't have time to write. How many dealers have ever used footnotes? Perhaps they can offer Spellguard, which helps correct spelling errors, but this sort of device is only efficient for letters. Psychologically, a good dealer will help you through the traumas however. Mine, the famous Harry of Fraser Associates, was wonderful, until he took offence when I rejected a box of paper he told me was 'micro-perfed' when it wasn't. For weeks I felt full of remorse and resentment until we made up. (Micro-perfed fan paper feeds continuously through your printer, but has no ragged edges when torn into sheets and thus looks as clean cut as ordinary paper.)

Fourth Trauma: alone with the thing

So while a dealer will help you switch on, nonetheless there comes the moment when there are just the two of you: you and your box. It is embarrassing and awkward. Some people like the discreet approach: 'Excuse me, but may I touch your escape key?' Others hang tough: 'If you default on me, I'll smash your screen'. Either way it takes at least a couple of nights to learn that anything so swift can be so stupid. I guess it will take even longer if your box also sports 'voice recognition'.

Fifth Trauma: the manuals

You turn, naturally, to the instruction book, to the wisdom of the printed guide. This can be the most traumatic of all. What had seemed at first glance to be knowledge is a sort of circular gibberish. The people who make and programme computers do not write prose. They are so into what they are doing that it seems impossible for them to imagine what it is like for a beginner. So the first couple of weeks or more can be very maddening, as one is obliged to find one's way through all the sophistication by crude trial and error. The software makes a difference here. A drawback with the Apricot, for example, is that it comes with *Superwriter*. Anything called 'super' is bound to be full of trash ('superpowers', for example). If you want another text editor for an Apricot, you have to pay a lot more — or get an illegal copy. Now my Osborne came with the widely used and powerful *Wordstar*. But the 763 page *Users Guide* to this (and everything else the machine could do) had no *index*! To make up for this, however, I got Arthur Naiman's *Introduction to Wordstar* which is most helpful and has 14 pages of indexes. One of the advantages of getting established software, therefore, is that you can throw out the manuals and use decently written guide books.

There is a lot of talk about machines being 'user friendly'. Usually it's sales hype. As Ray Hammond says, There are over-friendly gimmicks like 'mice', but they are for people — eg 'executives' — who feel themselves to be 'above' typing. New programmes for writers are also coming out, which take advantage of the power of 16 bit machines, like the Apricot and other IBM equivalents. *Word* has inbuilt footnoting, *Wordstar* has a new version (3.4) that underlines on screen. Will these work on your machine? Ring up and ask their respective companies and they will tell you to telephone America. All they know in the UK is what they get. English is now written on instructions from the States.

Sixth Trauma: Disk errors

Trial and error means errors. Suddenly the disk goes dead and you start to fear that you've lost a whole lot of work. Even making a back-up copy at the end of each working day (or night) may not save you. Once I lost not only a disk but also its back-up with two days' writing. The computer's weak line is its disk drives, which are mechanical; if the speed of one starts to shift, it can put corrupted signals onto its own directory drive, so I'm told. This was my problem: it meant not only that I couldn't get back into the disk, but also that it was knocking out the next disk as well. The drive was changed as it was under guarantee. The benefit of experience, then: never buy a word-box that doesn't have 12 months' cover.

Seventh Trauma: you are already out of date

At last, you have tapped away, learnt to move blocks in electronic 'cut and paste'. Your printer works, you've had a disk error and survived, life is easy. Then a colleague buys a machine that is even better than yours! There is no way round this. What you buy today will not be a bargain in six months' time — and will be improved upon in 12. Memories get bigger and more reliable. Communications systems easier. Lap portables, smaller and hardly thicker than the *New States**/*, have arrived and are on the way down in price. What you thought was a 'tool' becomes an addiction, not just because of what you have learned to do with it but also because of what you might be able to do if only you had . . . the new, improved version!

This isn't just the consumer game as devised and played by international monopoly capitalism. A Marxist justification for the investment is easy enough, if that's what you need. A word-box is not a mere commodity, it is an instrument of production. Yes, it has use-value. It is with a feeling of tremendous virtue, therefore — this being no mere plaything — that I can switch on my *Minor Miracle* to see if there are any messages for me on the Micro-users Microweb (061-456 4157 for comments), failing which, if I can't get through, I might just ask Prestel for the latest score in India. □

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I'M DREAMING OF A RED CHRISTMAS . . .

Cora Kaplan explores the fears and desires induced by Christmas

IN MY POST-WAR New England childhood a red star shone defiantly at the top of my family's Christmas tree, signifying our distance from both the Christian and capitalist meanings of the holiday. For us to celebrate Christmas at all was a complex heterodoxy. Jews, atheists, communists, we nevertheless refused to turn our backs on our national winter carnival; instead we tried to make it ours by emphasising its pagan pleasures, harnessing the Christian millennium to contemporary radical hopes.

These were Cold War years in which collective radical culture was fragmented and demoralised. I am not sure that we achieved more than a kind of loony cultural pluralism, but at least we tried. On Christmas Eve we sang traditional carols out of a little blue pamphlet distributed free by the Bethlehem Steel Corporation, adding favourite IWW ballads, so that 'Silent Night' might be followed by 'Joe Hill' and 'Good King Wenceslas' by a satisfyingly vicious anti-clerical song beginning 'Long-haired preachers come out every night / just to tell us what's wrong and what's right . . .' For the rest our Christmas was straight-up secular Anglo-American — stockings, presents, relatives and an enormous meal cooked by my mother.

The most important holiday on the national calendars of the English speaking world, Christmastime is a notoriously hard moment to radicalise. It has its own radical history; as a day and season it has been used to demonstrate and resist, most especially and recently against militarism, but our dominant culture uses it with sinister success to emphasise traditional definitions of public and private, to impose through its secular and Christian themes the notion of happy sanctified families shored up by a benign capitalism. Christmas honours family life as a model of subordinate social relations, privatised units of consumption and pleasure, with work — however appalling its conditions and meagre its rewards — as a necessary evil to sustain it. Christmas unreformed celebrates the family as the only appropriate receptacle for personal feeling, implying that there is nothing to struggle for beyond its boundaries, no legitimate struggle to be had within it.

It is just such 'national' 'familial' representations that the Left has had such difficulty in transforming. Never mind that only some 5 per cent of British domestic units include a male 'provider', a non-working full-time 'housewife and mother' and young children. This minority household form is represented as the only ideal celebrant of the holiday — the old, single or sick become the symbolic objects of charity of this magical nuclear family. The increasingly undeserving poor — strikers and the long term unemployed — are posed as marginal to it, not only economically unable to be full participants but outside the legitimate polity. Mary's nuclear family was a curious one, and Jesus, I guess, a bastard, but modern Mariolatry doesn't therefore honour the single parent or her offspring.

Mary's nuclear family was a curious one, and Jesus, I guess, a bastard, but modern Mary worship doesn't therefore honour the single parent or her offspring

Against the tyrannical ideal most of us are found wanting, and we feel the want unwillingly but dreadfully at Christmas. Many of my socialist and feminist friends hate Christmas for the deeply atavistic and regressive feelings it calls up, for its seductive appeal to repeat, relive and repair the past in the name of childhood. Its bells toll us home to our conventional places as mothers, fathers and children — or leave us homeless if we are none of these.

MOST ESPECIALLY, most awfully, the siren song of a national familial Christmas speaks to mothers. God alone knows why, since the only idle, rested mother at Christmas — except of course for the rich who still keep servants — is Mary, serene in plaster, wood and plastic. Mothers pay dearly for being the symbol and source of the holiday, for it is they who transform the raw products of material culture into an emotionally edible form. Whether there is a little or a lot, mothers buy, decorate, wrap, and cook most of it. They and their mothers, daughters and any other women drawn into a household do most of the manual labour at Christmas, and the lion's share of the caring, emotional labour too.

Very many of these women work outside the home in jobs that are especially hard at Christmastime so that these extra tasks are added on to the ordinary inequities of the sexual division of labour. In my parents' household, for example, socialism only mildly affected the unequal distribution of tasks. My father did a great deal of domestic back up labour, more than most men, but my mother (who worked outside the home too) bought and wrapped all of the presents and cooked the main meal. I always felt that Christmas was her event, her responsibility.

Thirteen of my 18 years in Britain have been spent as both a single parent and a working mother. Most of the year I positively enjoy being a single parent in spite of its obvious difficulties. At Christmas nostalgia and confusion reign; I am beset with anxiety that I cannot provide a good-enough Christmas, or, what is the same thing, be a good-enough mother on my own. Every year I try to subvert and remake its symbols and rituals; as an individual exercise in transformation it has severe limitations.

Some years I seem to do all right; others have been spectacular but instructive failures. In 1974 my mother-in-law and a Jewish American friend came to stay. 'What are you *doing*?' asked my mother-in-law, a working actress recently emancipated by divorce and living a nomadic, busy life in cheap hotels. 'What in the *hell* are you doing?' asked my friend, childless and single with no dangerous nostalgia for Christmas past for her guilt to feed on. Horrified they watched me spend money I did not have, cook huge, unwanted quantities of food, lavish my son with expensive presents. It was a ludicrous and compulsive private pantomime in which I played mummy *and* daddy, successful producer and affluent consumer. I went through these multiple roles tranced and stubborn, like one of Freud's hysterics, expressing with each gesture the impossibility of being all or any of these symbolic figures.

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The somewhat shameful memory of that Christmas must be balanced against the memory of small victories and pleasures: of a delighted child climbing into bed with me to unpack his stocking, of handmade red stars, women's symbols, birds of peace, of good friends with whom to assess the year's gains and losses and think ahead. Nevertheless, my son, now 16, has gently but firmly taken the whole business out of my hands. Last year and this he has chosen to go on a skiing holiday organised by his comprehensive school — saving up for the privilege of foregoing family Christmas. I am both grateful to him and, at the same time, bereft, for suddenly there is no place in the secular nativity for me to claim.

OVER THE LAST few weeks I have talked about the theme of this article with friends. 'Christmas isn't about mothers', one said. 'Christmas is all about men, about male largesse and the power of money.' I thought about that, about the New Born King, Father Christmas and Dad with his wallet out, coalesced and fused into an icon of male power. But I could take this compounded image only so far in my imagination. There was a Christmas song in my childhood that used to blare through every main street loudspeaker:

> You better not shout, you better not cry
> You better watch out, I'm telling you why,
> Santa Claus is coming to town.
> He sees you when you're sleeping, he knows when you're awake,
> He knows when you are bad or good, so be good for goodness sake.

I lived then in a Massachusetts town famous as the home of one of the great eighteenth century Calvinist preachers, Jonathan Edwards. Here was his God, absolute and punitive, decked out in red: a magical agent of surveillance more powerful than McCarthy and the FBI tracking communists. ('He's making a list, you knew that he would / Of who has been bad, and who has been good . . .') I hated that song and it frightened me, but I did not associate it with the paternal power against which I did daily and intimate battle but rather with the power of the State, as it was levelled in those years against my parents and others for standing

'What are you *doing*?' asked my mother-in-law. 'What in the *hell* are you doing?' asked my friend, childless and single with no dangerous nostalgia for Christmas past for her guilt to feed on

Cath Jackson

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brave witness against its unjust decrees.

This distinction — and connection — between the public and private forms of power seems especially relevant this hard Christmas of 1984. This year it will be difficult even for Tories and Social Democrats to argue for the mythical harmony of interests that sustain dominant versions of the holiday. For one effect of the miners' strike is to make sharply visible today what is true every year, that large sections of the population cannot share, if they would, in the annual pig-out, because they are in dire want and without prospects.

There are however much more positive political transformations that have emerged from the strike — ones which have undermined the conservative hegemony of Christmas as a unified emblem of national nostalgia smugly celebrating an idealised familial past and future. Although MacGregor's Christmas bribe and the Miners' Christmas Appeal both invoke traditional symbols of family and childhood, mobilisation inside and outside the striking communities have in important ways broken down the public/private divisions that hold them in place. To keep going the striking communities have undergone dynamic change, socialising the invisible labour of women, shifting the burden of child care. Women have taken up central public, political and polemical roles in the struggle.

This Christmas, in these communities, conventional images of them as plaster madonnas or perfect housewives are neither relevant nor credible. Equally the iconic meaning of charity has been challenged. Across the nation those who give and who organise the giving in the Christmas appeal do not do so to pacify a potentially rebellious working class, but to support their rebellion and resistance, to valorise the defence of the mining communities and their collective futures.

Every year we are subjected on the box to an adaptation of Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, and strong Tory men and women weep at the death of Tiny Tim while Bob Cratchit and his wife wait passively for Scrooge's 'change of heart'. This year, even with MacGregor a shoo-in for Scrooge, we have some reason to rewrite the story differently with both Mr and Mrs Cratchit as active agents of change. The events of the last few weeks in the strike and the mobilisation around it have demonstrated just *how* important are the connections between public cultural meaning, private feeling and militant political struggle. We need to hang on to that understanding. We need to take Red Christmas, and the social and psychic critiques that shape it out of doors, beyond the individual household into a collective public space, where it will crowd out and displace the wooden nativities, those familial idols of the ruling class, which have stood there for so long. □

Cora Kaplan lectures at Sussex University and is working on a book on class, feminism and literature in the 19th Century.

The intellectuals' betrayal

Charles Plouviez takes a last look at Nineteen Eighty-Four

THAT WAS The Year That Was. From now on, Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* can never be the same again. The novel, like the year, now belongs to the past, and will either survive alongside *Gulliver's Travels* because it is worth reading, or sink into the obscurity of Eng Lit courses.

So perhaps now for the first time in 35 years, we can begin to read the book as it really is, without the embarrassment that has dogged it from the start. While it is true that the first British book reviewers understood it pretty well as a satire, it was by no means only in the USA, torn by McCarthyism, that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was seen as a sick man's recantation of his socialist beliefs and an attack on the meek-and-mild Attlee government. I remember well the arguments in pubs after constituency party meetings in the early 1950s, and the difficulty encountered by those of us who professed to believe in both socialism and Orwell.

We were not helped by Isaac Deutscher who wrote in 1954, '*1984* is a document of dark disillusionment not only with Stalinism but with every form and shade of socialism. It is a cry from the abyss of despair.' And a couple of years later, Christopher Hollis was writing of Orwell as a fellow Etonian who had suffered the misfortune of not being converted to Catholicism — 'it is not surprising that . . . those empty souls, that have nothing else to worship, should give themselves to the mad worship of power.'

'Mr Orwell's book is a satirical pamphlet. I notice that some critics have said that his prophecy is not probable. Probability is not a necessary condition of satire which, when it pretends to draw the future, is, in fact, scourging the present.'

V.S. Pritchett reviewing *1984*

For years the debate simmered and for a time it was pushed to the back burner, like the Cold War itself. Then, as the year began to get nearer, a new embarrassment arose. Journalists began to use 1984 as a symbol of everything they disliked, from bureaucratic muddle to technological advance. Perhaps memories of the book were growing dim, replaced by the various film and TV versions, because the 'hi-tech' aspect of Orwell's novel is very sketchily, almost lazily done. Its futurology in that sense barely extends beyond the two-way telescreen and the 'speakwrite'. Gadgetry wasn't important to Orwell, and that is not what the book is about. Yet for years, every computer development, every new 'bugging' device or advertising gimmick, was sure to be greeted as another sign that 1984 was approaching. And since the *date* undeniably was approaching, the point became scarcely worth disputing.

WHEN THE fatal year came at last, after the initial colour supplement fanfares, disillusion soon set in. Horrid as Mrs Thatcher may be as a political phenomenon, she is not Big Brother, nor even Big Sister. Orwell's BB would never have made a major policy announcement on the Jimmy Young show. And nor will Arthur Scargill fit the role of Goldstein, even if, with a little help from his media friends, he has nearly achieved the universal execration of a Two Minutes Hate nightly on TV.

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1985
1984
Now, you can read the book as it really is, without the embarrassment that has dogged it from the start!
ORWELL
1984
A. KRAUZE '84

Andrzej Krauze

In October, when the new film was released, the disillusion seems to have been complete. A fine film of an important book, the critics' message ran, but what is the relevance of it any more? '1984 may ironically be the wrong year . . .for *Nineteen Eighty-Four*' wrote Nigel Andrews in the *Financial Times*, and John Coleman in the *New Statesman* was similarly bothered by 'the relevance of so much brainwashed squalor to *our* 1984.'

It seems, then, quite a good moment to start reclaiming *Nineteen Eighty-Four* for socialism, by ignoring the superficial sci fi aspects of the book and concentrating on some of the deeper themes. The enormous critical corpus explaining where the book fails is both a proof of its actual success and an admission of the critical failure to encompass its complexity, paradox and sheer intellectual density.

Orwell's fears about the corruption of language, the retreat from belief in objective fact, and the dangers of totalitarianism latent even in our well-meaning liberal tradition have had sufficient critical attention; though the film critics quoted are surely wrong in dismissing their present relevance now that the post-war squalor of 1948 has been replaced with the post-monetarist squalor of 1984.

But the theme of betrayal, which runs through the story like a *leitmotif*, has had less attention than it deserves. The ultimate betrayal of one another by Winston and Julia may not be the most successfully worked out part of the novel, but it was important to Orwell. The touchstone of any quality of life he could accept was that two people could love each other and keep faith. Only when that faith was broken did Winston take the final step and 'sincerely' love Big Brother.

On the wider canvas, the Party has betrayed the revolution, and the Inner Party has betrayed the Outer Party. And every supporting character is somehow implicated in treachery. The Parsons' little daughter betrays her stupidly loyal father. The intelligent Symes is betrayed by his own intelligence (an important Orwellian paradox), and the creepy Mr Charrington betrays the nostalgic relics of the past of which he professed to be the guardian. O'Brien befriends Winston and Julia solely to betray them.

However much the crude mechanics of

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society in Airstrip One are based on Orwell's conception of Soviet communism, he appears to be describing the English class system, run not by capitalists but hired petty bourgeois 'intellectuals'. In spite of the attempts at explanation in Goldstein's book, nothing in the novel really explains how members of the Party are recruited and promoted, and in practice the system is predominently hereditary. Winston Smith is not, as Jenni Calder would have him, 'the common man'; he is a member of the lower-upper-middle class — a representative of the Orwell who was ashamed because his parents could not afford the full fees at St Cyprian's.

The 'common' men and women are the 'proles', and woven into the novel is that other pet Orwellian theme, the inability of the middle class to make contact with or truly understand the working class. If hope lies with the proles, as Winston at one point thinks, there is nothing he can do to help them realise their power, and all that he can draw from them is the comforting nostalgia of cheap music, old nursery rhymes and sham-antique tat. The proles have been betrayed most comprehensively of all.

Just as Winston is not the common man, equally he is not a middle-class Everyman. He is a writer. Significantly, although much is made of the three Ministries which dominate, physically and politically, the London landscape, all the characters in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* come from the Ministry of Truth, standing for the literary world that Orwell knew — the world of the BBC, Ministry of Information, and even *Tribune*. There are no scientists, no teachers, no manufacturers, no shopkeepers except the obsequious Charrington, no soldiers except on the telescreen. Publicans, proles and policemen play bit parts (as no doubt they did in Orwell's working life), but all the rest of the cast are writers of a sort — revisers of *Times* leaders, dictionary compilers, editors of pulp fiction. It is a deliberate travesty of the world in which Orwell earned his living, and represents his misgivings about the integrity of journalism and, more widely, about intellectuals who would compromise the search for truth with 'baser' considerations.

HE HAD his reasons. Victor Gollancz's hand-washing preface to *The Road to Wigan Pier* and Kingsley Martin's refusal to print in the *New Statesman* Orwell's first-hand account of the perils of POUM had bitten deeply. He came to doubt whether a 'decent' (always the key Orwellian word) political journalism was possible.

Winston Smith is then a hired pen and when he contrives secretly to write his own thing, he symbolically develops a block, caused by using a steel pen instead of the 'speakwrite'. (Orwell has recorded that he felt guilty when he wrote book reviews straight on to the typewriter, instead of repeatedly correcting them in manuscript, as he did his novels.)

Winston's work is a betrayal, as is the work of the talkative Symes, the lexicographer who is helping to shrink the language. Yet they both find their work technically enthralling. Orwell's fascination with every aspect of the business of communications comes out repeatedly in the early chapters of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (as well as in his essays), where

'Orwell's criticisms were largely true: that left-wing intellectuals were, too often, intellectually dishonest, selective in their moral indignation, furtive worshippers of power, and startlingly ignorant both of political realities and of the working class.'

Donat O'Donnell (a.k.a. Conor Cruise O'Brien) reviewing the *Collected Essays*

we see language and truth savaged by men who are neither wicked nor stupid, but who derive a great deal of what we have come to call 'job satisfaction' from the work.

Treachery appears early in the first chapter, with the appearance on the telescreen of Goldstein. 'He was the primal traitor, the earliest defiler of the Party's purity.' Yet Goldstein, it seems certain, does not exist: he is a device of the Inner Party to channel and contain dissent. In terms of the 'realistic novel', Goldstein's book and the part played by O'Brien are absurd. Without O'Brien's initiative, Winston Smith's rebellion would have been short-lived, and remained private and ineffectual. Why should any regime create and elaborate opposition in order to encourage dissidents, and then go to the trouble that O'Brien took with Winston to 're-train' them? How does O'Brien oscillate between the Ministries of Truth and Love like a permanent secretary without portfolio? There is no other character in the book of O'Brien's status and outlook, because in real life a party of O'Briens could never co-exist peacefully. O'Brien is a kind of *deus in machina*.

But then, Orwell's novels are never realistic, and O'Brien is charged with allegorical meanings. At one level, he satirises the kind of senior BBC executive with whom Orwell had worked, whose suave liberal pretentions are in practice always at the mercy of organisational *realpolitik*. At another level, he is the personification of intellectual self-betrayal in Western society. His first conversation with Winston in prison reveals the 'doublethink' that has all along been behind their relationship.

> Winston started to his feet . . .
> 'They've got you too!' he cried.
> 'They got me a long time ago,' said O'Brien with a mild, almost regretful irony. He stepped aside. From behind him there emerged a broad-chested guard with a long black truncheon in his hand.
> 'You knew this, Winston,' said O'Brien. 'Don't deceive yourself. You did know it — you have always known it.' Yes, he saw now, he had always known it.

AS A WRITER and as a man, Orwell strove for an heroic level of honesty. But honesty did not mean simplicity (that conjunction is a peculiarly Anglo-Saxon heresy): and we can begin, since Crick's biography, to understand his complexity both as man and as writer. He knew only too well the kind of shifts and compromises that were unavoidable to scratch a living or sustain a marriage, and he tried to integrate the compromises into the living and the writing. 'I was sometimes unfaithful to Eileen and I also treated her badly,' he wrote after his first wife's death, '. . . but it was a real marriage.' And there is the same tension in his writing about writing. In 1948, the real 1984, he wrote of the political writer (meaning himself), 'his writings, in so far as they have any value, will always be the products of the saner self that stands aside, records the things that are done and admits their necessity, but refuses to be deceived as to their true nature.'

Since 1948, the whole labour movement has come to share the uncertainties and self-doubts which Orwell suffered and transformed into literature. The simple ideological certainties and rigid party loyalties that dismayed Orwell now disturb us all. The conflicts between principle and practical action, the suspicions and accusations of treachery, the gap between rhetoric and real meaning — these themes from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are more relevant than ever to the debate about socialist today.

Orwell doesn't give us the answers. We each have to face our own Room 101, and comprehend the capacity for treachery and compromise that is in us all, and go on from where Orwell left off. In 1985* *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a good place to start. □

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*Basil Ransome-Davies's sequel to 1984 appears on p.42.

Charles Plouviez is a retired advertising executive. The enlarged quotes are taken from Unwelcome Guerrilla *published by the* New Statesman, *1984.*

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Camera Press

'TAWNEYISM' IS NOT ENOUGH

Gareth Stedman Jones looks back on the development of British socialism over the last century and argues that the way ahead will not be found simply by a return to past analysis

1984 MARKS the centenary of British socialism. This year the Fabians have celebrated 100 years of continuous existence, while admirers of William Morris have staged an exhibition to mark the 150th anniversary of his birth. This year also, though the occasion has passed largely unnoticed, marxists could have commemorated the centenary of marxist political organisation in Britain. 1884 was the year of the formation of the Social Democratic Federation, a direct if generally unsung ancestor of the British Communist Party.

But 1984 has not been a good year in which to celebrate such anniversaries. Both on the left and the right of British socialism, the experience of the 1980s has been one of uncertainty and bewilderment. Marxists have had to come to terms with the visible fragmentation of working class industrial and political solidarities. Fabians have had to witness probably the sharpest challenge to collectivist habits of thought in government and society since their foundation.

1974: the army brought socialism to Portugal

In addition, both the right and the left of the Labour Party have found themselves confronted by an uncomfortable degree of scepticism among the British population at large. Well into Mrs Thatcher's second term of office, Labour is still a long way from recapturing the loyalty of its 'lost millions'. In the immediate aftermath of 1979, it was not difficult to pin the blame on the right of the party. Labour's defeat was attributed to the political and ideological bankruptcy of the Wilson and Callaghan years, and Tony Benn headed a powerful campaign of moral and constitutional reformation designed to lead Labour back to the alleged purity of its grassroots socialist vision. But the new puritans fared no better than the old-style party bosses. In 1983, the Labour election manifesto — in Benn's view, the most socialist document ever put to the British people — was rejected even more unambiguously than the dispiriting keep-us-in-business approach of 1979. Labour leaders gave the impression of defending policies which were unthought out, internally inconsistent or only half believed even by themselves.

Faced with this dismal experience of the recent past preceded by the tarnished record of the Labour governments of the 1960s and '70s, and culminating in the formation of the SDP, it is understandable that socialists this year have focussed on their present deficiencies. The mood of self-questioning was actually initiated by marxists several years ago with Eric Hobsbawm's 1978 lecture, 'The Forward March of Labour Halted'. Now, in their centenary year, Fabians have joined in with their own interpretation of the point at which the forward march of British socialism went into reverse through, for instance, their centenary volume, *Fabian Essays in Socialist Thought* and Anthony Wright's succinct resumé in the *New Statesman* (7 September).

However, while Hobsbawm is concerned with the breakdown of Labour as a party of organised workers, Wright focuses on Labour's crisis of philosophical belief. He argues that the domestic tradition of British socialism — of the Fabians, R.H. Tawney and G.D.H. Cole — faltered and lost confidence at the end of the 1960s. It was morally contaminated by its association with the 'pragmatism' of the Wilson government and intellectually undermined by the assaults of the *New Left Review*. Under the impact of these events,

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the Left stopped 'reading Tawney', took up continental marxism and turned its back on the problems of Labour governments. By 1983, alientated from its own past, the Labour Party lacked a 'coherent public philosophy' and had lost its idealism; it was Mrs Thatcher who was able to ask 'our question: what sort of society do we want to live in?' Wright's answer to Labour's problem followed from his diagnosis. It was to renew the native tradition of British socialism and above all to go back to Tawney.

Such a 'going back to' has been a common response of socialists in times of uncertainty and disorientation, whether it is to Marx or Morris, Lenin or, more lately, Tawney. Appeals of this kind may serve to cover quite new emphases with a clothing of tradition or canonical authority. Althusser's 'reading' of Marx or the more recent appeals to the authority of Gramsci may have served this function within a communist tradition. Or it may just express the wistful desire to conjure up again a time when the issues were apparently simpler and the strategic and moral choices more clearcut.

But in whatever terms they are couched, such rallying cries can never serve as a substitute for rethinking socialism in relation to the present. Without this ingredient, recourse to authority is at best a recipe for the survival of a sect. The vitality of socialism has always depended upon the cogency of its promise of a better future. At times of socialist advance that promise has never been merely an article of faith. It has also implied a claim to knowledge of the possibility of a superior system of social relations and political organisation. But the conviction of such claims always depended upon how far they were involved with actual political and social problems.

In the last 20 years, the most impressive examples of rethinking political and theoretical positions in this sense have come from marxist currents in Western Europe. The leftward thrust that ran from the late '60s to the mid '70s — from the May events in France and the Italian 'Hot Spring' to the overthrowing of fascism in Portugal, Spain and Greece — both gave new life and energy to revolutionary currents in a Leninist or Trotskyist tradition and brought communist parties within striking distance of power. From one angle, this could be seen as a replay of the old debate between revolution and reformism. But the differences are more interesting than the similarities. For reformism was represented by the impressive and creative record of the Italian Communist Party and this in turn forced the more sophisticated representatives of the Bolshevik tradition to address the contemporary problems of Western Europe rather than hiding behind the mantle of a world communist movement which by that stage had all but disappeared.

It is because historical situations change and because thought about the future is so strongly coloured by the circumstances of the present that traditions of socialist thought are a good deal less continuous and less pure than their followers like to think. Rather therefore than emphasise the relevance of past socialist thinkers to the problems of today, it may be more fruitful — and a better homage to their achievements as innovative thinkers — to highlight the differences between their situation and our own. It has been the instability of State forms in the Mediterranean and the schisms within the communist movement that has forced renewals in marxist thought. It is perhaps the new strains within the British State and split within British social democracy that will force renewal here — if there is no retreat into comforting orthodoxy.

IN THE FABIAN tradition, the temptation to establish affinities between 'then' and 'now' has been particularly acute. For in no other country is it easy to imagine a socialist association able to celebrate 100 years of continuous existence. But it is no belittlement of the Fabian Society or of other forms of British socialism to suggest that this achievement owes as much to the exceptional stability and continuity of the British State and the British political order as it does to the commitment and tenacity of socialists themselves.

In the last 100 years Britain has been untouched by revolution and has fought two world wars without experiencing the trauma of military defeat, occupation or civil war. Not only has the territory of the United Kingdom remained intact — allowing for the perennial exception of Ireland — but even the accumulation and eventual dismantling of a vast formal empire was accomplished without the bitter divisions and political discontinuities generated within other ex-colonial powers.

In its heyday from the 1880s to the 1950s, Fabianism was not bitterly pitted against this order. It was part of it — its enlightened, reformist and sometimes visionary wing. If it represented the first and most influential form of revisionism within the Socialist International before 1914, this was above all because of its confident sense of proximity to the sources of political authority within Britain. Only in Britain could a tactic of the 'permeation' of the State be plausibly grounded in experience. Within the higher echelons of the State, Fabianism never found its way blocked by an impervious bureaucracy, a threatening military or an obscurantist church, as organisations for reform did elsewhere in Europe.

Nor on the other hand, was Fabianism ever seen as a serious threat to 'the British way of life'. Despite the occasionally un-'sensible extremism' of some of its leaders — the Webbs' panegyric to the Soviet Union or Shaw's brief flirtation with Italian fascism, for example — Fabianism never found itself the victim of the sort of right-wing populist backlash that afflicted even the most moderate forms of socialist thought in the United States in the McCarthy era. To explain, then, the exceptional longevity of Fabianism as a current of opinion and activity, it has to be seen as one component in what until the 1960s had been an immensely self-confident ruling political order operating in a State which had not suffered serious disruption since 1688. The assumptions on which the Fabian or social democratic tradition was based were not peremptorily shattered by hammer blows — 1917, 1933 or 1940 — but slowly and silently corroded by changes in the post-war world and Britain's place within it.

Fabianism in Tawney's time encompassed a wide range of preoccupations from garden cities and health to the critique of educational privilege and inherited wealth. Yet all these concerns were held together within the terms of a dominant contrast, that between the profit motive and the competitive scramble of individuals on the one hand and an ideal of public service as the guiding principle of society on the other. Profit and competition could either be considered immoral, as they were by Tawney, or wasteful and anachronistic, as they had been in the original *Fabian Essays*.

If such sentiments struck a chord beyond the labour movement, it was because they represented the socialist variant of a more widely shared disdain for businessmen and industrialism across the political spectrum, whether in the name of 'culture', the higher ideals of empire or gentrified visions of the pastoral. Conversely, ideals of public service also drew sustenance from a number of overlapping sources — the ethical codes of newly established 19th century professions, the missionary conception of service associated originally with Evangelical Christianity and lastly the marriage between scientific knowledge and humanitarian idealism embedded in Victorian and Edwardian positivism.

The association between socialism and professional expertise in early Fabian thought is well known. What is less often remarked is how a professional conception of morality also informs Tawney's picture of socialism. In *Equality* and *The*

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Acquisitive Society, the attitude of the businessman is contrasted with those of the doctor and the teacher. The doctor and the teacher are motivated by something higher than the making of money and it was partly along these lines that Tawney conceived the reformation of industry. Industry should be pursued as a profession.

Fixed within the parameters of this contrast between private profit and public service, the Fabian criticism of authority and the State remained muted and underdeveloped. While it would be a caricature to suggest that Fabians were blind to the possible abuses of State power, it would be fair to argue that they were less concerned about democratic safeguards in the exercise of authority than the fact that authority was in the wrong hands and in pursuit of the wrong aims. Tawney's criticism of the existing State in *Equality* focussed not so much upon its actual or potential relationship to the citizenry, but upon the social composition of its ruling personnel, its more or less exclusive recruitment from the public schools.

Camera Press

'Fabianism owes much to the exceptional stability of the British State'

Preoccupied with taking power from a profit-seeking capitalist class, the originally municipal and decentralised character of most socialist thinking, both Fabian and Marxist, gave way from around 1906 to a growing emphasis upon State power at a national level. Libertarian and local visions receded before a socialism in which power and knowledge radiated outwards from a political centre, whether in the name of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Fabian collectivist State or indeed the corporately conceived post-1945 Labour Welfare State.

It is not possible here to enumerate all the features, both social and ideological, which have combined to undermine this conception of socialism since the second world war. Most important has been Britain's economic decline. The relevance of socialism to a visibly declining capitalist economy cannot be argued in the same terms, nor can the case against the profit motive be quite so confidently assumed, when workers need to be convinced that an alternative would generate fuller employment and something better than the bureaucratic tutelage of actually existing socialist countries or the managerial autocracy practised in nationalised industries.

Less tangible is the way in which economic decline together with changing social and political expectations have begun to erode the political order itself. At least a decade before Mrs Thatcher broke with the post-war consensus, it had already come under challenge from the Left. The demand for equal civil rights for all citizens inaugurated a protracted civil war in Northern Ireland. Restiveness among women at their continuing subordination within social democracy initiated a feminist critique of all forms of male power and authority, whether capitalist or socialist. Black resentments at harassment and discrimination in the face of increasing political concessions to white racism dragged into the daylight the tacitly 'nativist' assumptions of much British Labour thinking. Established hierarchies of decision making were challenged by the students' movement, by shop-stewards and by council tenants' committees. In the '70s and early '80s the Bennite movement within constituency Labour parties continued a similar form of struggle against the traditional powers of parliamentary leadership.

At every level, established relations of authority and conventional channels of consultation were put in doubt. Mrs Thatcher, a swollen police force and severe unemployment have combined to keep these forces at bay. But the basic pattern has not changed. Arthur Scargill served his apprenticeship in the forward thrust of the Left between 1967 and 1974 and it is worth emphasising — a fact which traditional socialists have not yet begun to digest — that the most bitter strike of the twentieth century is being fought out *within a nationalised industry*.

If there are common features shared by these struggles, it is that they do not revolve around simple contests between capital and labour in a traditional sense, that they challenge not merely the existing holders of authority, but the credentials of authority itself. In this sense they are remote from, if not actively hostile to, notions of socialism as a generalisation of professional authority or professional morality. Fabians need more than the courage of old convictions. They need to start thinking again.

Finally, therefore, it is to give *New Left Review* too much credit to imagine that together with Wilson's 'pragmatism', it succeeded in forcing the Fabian tradition to stumble. In the years of its maximum impact between 1963 and 1973, the critique offered by *New Left Review* was effective because it had the audacity and confidence to state what now seems obvious — that the tradition of what it called 'labourism' was politically and ideologically bankrupt, a complacent prisoner of a conservative culture which it ostensibly purported to challenge. Nor is it convincing to argue that Fabianism was an accidental victim of Wilson's pragmatism. The Wilson cabinet contained such prominent Fabian intellectuals as Crosland and Crossman and a number of other long standing members. Yet all their forces could not combine to realise one of Tawney's most cherished dreams, the abolition of fee-paying public schools, let alone the dislodging of the privileged position of inherited wealth. It is too convenient to attribute the failure of a government, a party and a movement to the failings of one man.

But it would not be right to leave Fabianism standing alone in the dock. The developments of the last 20 years pose serious problems to socialists of all kinds. The relevance and desirability of socialism, let alone its necessity, cannot be assumed. It must be thought out anew, as it was at various decisive turning points in the past. In that process, socialists would do well to read Tawney, if only because of the enviable clarity and simplicity with which he was able to discuss some of the problems of perennial concern to socialism. But one thing is certain. 'Tawneyism' will not be enough. □

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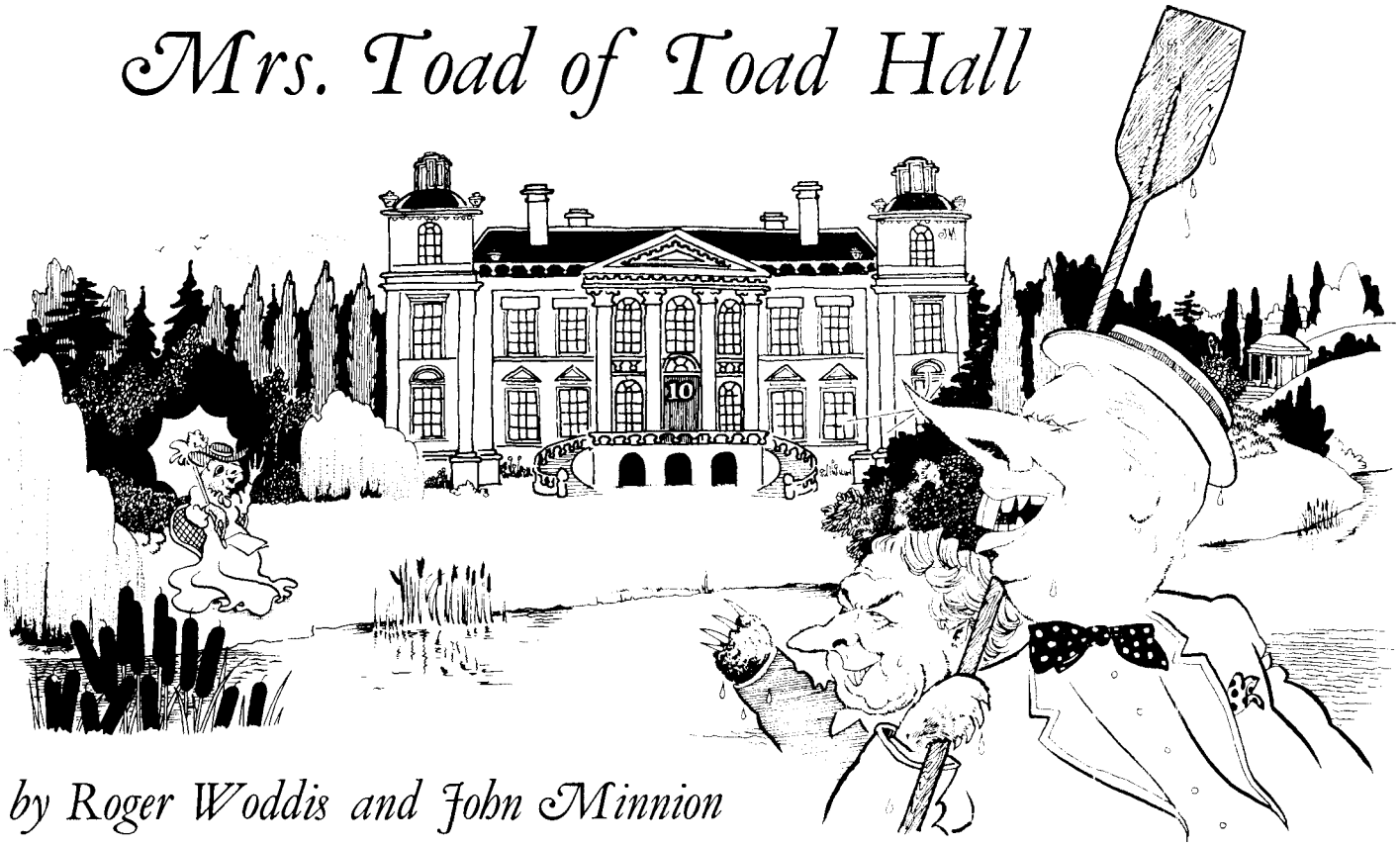
Mrs. Toad of Toad Hall



by Roger Woddis and John Minnion

THE RAT was sitting on the river bank, singing a little song. He had composed it himself, while waiting for his friend Mole.

He cleared his throat and started to sing his Wets' Wassail:

All along the backbenches,
Up and down the hall,
Wets are revolting,
Up tails all!

Up with the rebels
Down with Mrs T!
When they've had enough of her,
They'll call for *me*!

Mole shook his head and observed cautiously, 'You can't deny Mrs Toad *is* a power in the land — a major force, you might say — whereas you — well, not to put too fine a point on it, Rat, you're a minor —'

'Miner? *Miner*? Did you say "miner", Mole? Are you trying to *upset* me?'

'No, no, not at all, my dear chap,' said Mole hurriedly. 'I'm as wet as you are, though of course I don't have your Experience as a leader of men — and women — and — and *things*.'

'That's true,' said Rat, somewhat mollified by Mole's complimentary remarks. 'The trouble is, Mrs Toad has got it into her head that everything would be fine if it weren't for the weasels and stoats who live in the Wild Wood — the Enemy Within, as she calls them.'

After a moment's silence, the Mole said casually, 'Perhaps we ought to go and see her, Ratty.'

The Rat sat up suddenly, looking very annoyed. 'Why on earth should we go and see Mrs Toad? You know I can't stand her.'

'I know, I know,' said Mole hastily, 'but I thought we might find out what she's up to — you know her and her wild schemes.'

'Oh, very well, if you insist,' said Rat grumpily, 'I'll get the boat out.'

The sky was clear, but for a morning cloud, as they clambered aboard. 'I've never been in a boat before,' said the Mole. 'Is it nice?'

'Nice? *Nice*?' exclaimed Rat incredulously. 'It's the *only* thing. Believe me, my friend, there is *nothing* — absolutely nothing — half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats.' Then he added dreamily. 'Except, possibly, playing the organ or conducting Elgar's *Cockaigne Overture.*'

They cast off and, rounding a bend in the river, they soon came in sight of Toad Hall, an elegant old house which bore on the front door the bold legend:

No. 10
MRS TOAD'S PRIVATE RESIDENCE
NO UNEMPLOYED SCROUNGERS
OR MALCONTENTS

They disembarked, and as they approached the house a large policeman barred their path.

'Excuse me, gentlemen,' he said, respectfully touching his helmet, 'but do you have an appointment?'

'Not as such,' replied Rat, 'but we're personal friends of Mrs Toad.'

'Oh, that's all right, then,' smiled the policeman. 'You can't be too careful these days. Pass, friends.'

They found Mrs Toad at the back of the house, gazing with a rapt expression at a gypsy caravan painted in red, white and blue.

'So glad you dropped in!' cried Mrs Toad enthusiastically. 'Isn't she a beauty? Everything's possible with that splendid cart — I can travel everywhere, raise morale, lower inflation, defeat all our country's foes and solve all our problems! It's the New Technology!'

'Rubbish!' said Rat under his breath, then aloud, 'I know it's a silly question, but who's going to pull it?'

'Follow me,' said Mrs Toad, crooking her finger, and she led Rat and Mole to the paddock, where an old carthorse was grazing. 'His name's Unions — here, Unions, here — come and be harnessed.'

Unions made a dash for it, but eventually, after a struggle, they managed to catch him and hitch him to the caravan. Mrs Toad took the reins, the others climbed up and, with Unions tossing his head defiantly, they set off for the open road.

And it was there that disaster overtook them. Just when Mrs Toad was crying rapturously, 'Isn't this the life!', it was then that they heard a loud 'Poop-poop!' behind them, and looking back, they saw something enveloped in a cloud of dust, bearing down on them at incredible speed.

The old horse reared and plunged wildly; seconds later the caravan, its occupants hurled into the road, was lying on its side in the ditch.

Mrs Toad was sitting in the middle of the road, bruised and dishevelled, but with a dreamy look on her face. 'Poop-poop! A motor-car! — the only way to travel! O bliss! O poop-poop!'

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Weeks later Mole, Rat and Mr Badger consulted together.

'What are we going to do about her?' asked Mole. 'She's already had seven cars — and seven crashes. She's a hopeless driver and has no respect for law and order, but she's convinced she's the best driver in the world.'

'What you have to understand,' said Rat, with seeming seriousness, 'is that she's always right. The only trouble is, she's never heard of a U-turn.'

They looked to Badger for advice and support. 'One must try to be helpful,' he said. (It was a favourite word of his.) 'It's time we took Mrs Toad in hand and tried to make her see reason.'

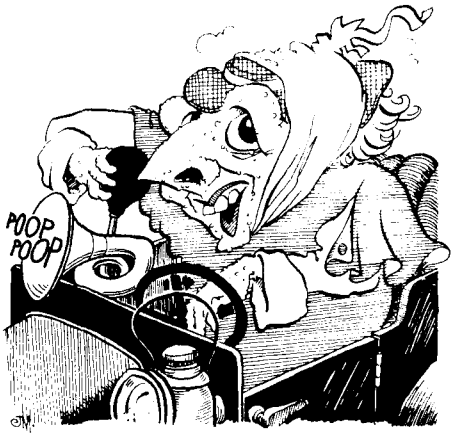
But their earnest appeals for reason and a change of direction proved to be of no avail. Mrs Toad waved her paw airily and kept repeating, 'There is no alternative.'

Aware that she was getting no backing from her friends, she drove off in a huff — nor did they see her again for several months. Toad Hall stood empty, while she visited various people in foreign parts who 'appreciated' her.

ON HER RETURN, Mrs Toad was met by Badger, Rat and Mole, who told her the dreadful news: Toad Hall had been taken over by the Wild Wooders.

It was the Badger who calmed her down. He told her of a secret underground passage that led from the river bank to a trap-door opening into the pantry at Toad Hall. The plan was to reclaim the Hall through this means while the Wild Wooders were holding a banquet in honour of the Chief Weasel, an active Yorkshire-bred animal who could do no wrong in the eyes of his followers.

On the night of the festivities Badger and his friends were hiding in the passage,



while overhead they heard cheering, clapping and singing. 'Just listen to them!' said Badger incredulously. ' "Victory to the Wild Wooders", indeed! The hour has come! Follow me!'

And clutching their sticks, swords and assorted weapons, they burst into the banqueting hall.

What a squealing and a squeaking and a screeching filled the air! The terrified weasels and stoats and ferrets fled in panic, upsetting tables and chairs.

Mrs Toad grappled with the Chief Weasel, crying, 'Submit! Submit! No one defies me with impunity! I'm the Boss — I'm *Toad*!'

To which the Chief Weasel responded with, 'Toad be blowed! The Weasels united will never be defeated!'

The battle raged for hours, while the four friends laid about them with war whoops, whacking at every head that dared show itself, until the hall was cleared.

'Prison's too good for them!' exclaimed Mrs Toad. 'They ought to be hung, drawn and quartered! They ought to be boiled in oil! They ought to have their ears pulled off and their toenails torn out and their bones broken one by one!'

'Easy!' said the Badger soothingly. 'That wouldn't be helpful.'

'It seems a pity to waste all this food,' said Mole. 'Why don't we invite all the other animals to a grand supper to celebrate our victory?'

'*My* victory!' said Mrs Toad. 'If it wasn't for my fearless leadership and my incredible courage and my God-given sense of mission — !'

'Oh, belt up do,' muttered Rat, his patience exhausted.

She looked at him in cold fury, her eyes blazing, then recovering, she said haughtily, 'Go, Mole, and order the banquet; and when you send out the invitations, remember to mention that I shall be making a speech on Our Prison System, The Deserving Rich, Victorian Values, Wild Wooders and How to Deal with Them, The Beauty of Property, The Wicked Ways of Local Government and kindred subjects. And I shall end with a little song I composed myself, called TOADY TO TOAD!'

'No, no song,' said the Rat firmly, 'not even a *little* one. You know your songs are all vanity and boasting, and your speeches are full of self-praise and false heroics and — and —'

'And gas,' put in the Badger, helpful as always.

'Oh, very well,' said Mrs Toad, somewhat crestfallen. 'Perhaps you're right. I know I *have* been full of myself — but I shall reform. You'll never have cause to blush for me again. From now on I'll be humble and modest — and be ready to admit that even *I* can be wrong sometimes!'

And looking out of the window, now that day was beginning to dawn, they saw the brightening sky was filled with flying pigs.

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REGULAR readers of this annual cerebellum-stretcher will be wondering: Where is Jeff Squiffy? I have often asked myself the same question. He was last seen about a year ago, as he sidled out of the front door muttering that he had to do some 'essential research' for his next book, *Susan Sontag As Metaphor*. Since then, not a dicky-bird — except for the occasional postcard from some grove of academe such as Crete, Bermuda or Vanuatu (a.k.a. the New Hebrides). In other words the old brute's done a runner, leaving me and the little Squiffys to fend for ourselves. *Men!* Frankly I've had enough of the ridiculous, hairy, evil-smelling, plug-ugly layabouts to last me a lifetime, so I've decided to devote this year's quiz entirely to the female of the species. The only concession I make to the tradition established by my renegade spouse is to prepare you for the mental aerobics ahead with a few questions about booze. Who was Brandy Nan, as in the rhyme 'Brandy Nan, Brandy Nan, left in the lurch,/Her face to the gin-shop, her back to the church'? What went with Bridge, and Women and Champagne? Why might Bloody Mary go into Little Mary? What, in America, is an ale-wife? Which woman wrote: 'Three highballs, and I think I'm St Francis of Assissi'? That should be enough of an *aperitif*; on to the hard stuff.

Annual report

In 1984

a) Who won $90,000 from a restaurant?

b) Who won $100,000 from an orchestra?

c) Who won £15,000 from a sugar company?

d) Who won £1 million from Jan Hoch?

e) Why was a former contestant in *Ask The Family* in the dock at the Old Bailey, and what was her sentence?

f) Why was Peggy Barlow in the dock at the Old Bailey, and what was her sentence?

g) Which film actress, launching her book about beauty, said: 'Oh, I'm ugly, ugly'?

h) Which film actress, launching her book about beauty, said: 'No woman

is going to change her life for the sake of her skin'?

i) Which film actress, celebrating her 50th birthday, said: 'I've got the temperament of a young girl. I dance, I play the guitar and feel as if I'm 16, but my face doesn't fit'?

j) Who was described as 'a very slight woman, full-bosomed and given to roundness...who insists on wearing awful hats'?

k) Who, after a narrow escape from death, said: 'I am very, very lucky to be alive but strangely, at the time, I didn't think I was actually going to die. Everything seemed to happen in slow motion'?

l) Who, after a narrow escape from death, said: 'In church, on Sunday morning, it was a lovely morning — we have not had many lovely days — and the sun was just coming through the stained glass windows and falling on some flowers right across the church and it just occurred to me that this was the day I was not meant to see'?

m) Who was kept awake by a cricket?

n) Who left Britain and returned to her native land after 17 years' absence, saying afterwards 'I have been welcomed home like the Prodigal Son in the Bible'?

o) Who left her native land for Britain, saying 'I'm here because I want to be and I plan to be here for a long time, not just this summer'?

p) Who said of whom: 'When I look back on it, I probably should have pushed her...I hold her responsible for what happened'?

q) Who said of whom: 'She's a $4 million...I can't say it, but it rhymes with rich'?

r) Who said: 'Rupert Murdoch is an individual who — with all his money, with all his power, with all his connections to the White House — does not have the worth to wipe the dirt under my mother's shoes'?

s) How did Anne Ferris make history with Bentom Boy?

Purely fictitious

1: Which novels begin with these words?

a) He — for there could be no doubt of his sex, though the fashion of the time did something to disguise it — was in the act of slicing at the head of a Moor which swung from the rafters.

b) The two women were alone in the London flat.

'The point is,' said Anna, as her friend came back from the telephone on the landing, 'the point is that as far as I can see, everything's cracking up.'

c) I wakened quickly and sat up in bed abruptly. It is only when I am anxious that I waken easily and for a minute I did not know why my heart was beating faster than usual. Then I remembered. The old reason. He had not come home.

d) There were 117 psychoanalysts on the Pan Am flight to Vienna and I'd been treated by at least six of them. And married a seventh.

e) 'Lor' love you, sir!' Fevvers sang out in a voice that clanged like dustbin lids.

f) 'Boo, hoo! Ow, ow; Oh! oh! Me'll die. Boo, hoo. The pain, the pain! Boo, hoo!'

2: Which novels end with these words?

a) But, in spite of these deficiencies, the wishes,the hopes, the confidence, the predictions of the small band of friends who witnessed the ceremony, were fully answered in the perfect happiness of the union.

b) She glanced upwards for a second at the soft blue vault of the midsummer night sky. Not a cloud misted its solemn depths. To-morrow would be a beautiful day.

c) I lingered round them, under that benign sky; watched the moths fluttering among the heath and hare-bells; listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass; and wondered how anyone could ever imagine unquiet slumbers, for the sleepers in that quiet earth.

d) But Nanda knew that whatever might happen in the future, nothing for her would ever be the same again.

e) 'My Master,' he says, 'has forewarned me. Daily he announces more distinctly, — "Surely I come quickly!" and hourly I more eagerly respond, — "Amen; even so come, Lord Jesus!"'

f) Then the curtain rose. They spoke.

Passing on

Among those who died in 1984,

a) Who starred in *The Four Feathers* and *The Thief of Baghdad*?

b) Who starred in *Yield of the Night*?

c) Who starred in *Bombay Talkie*?

d) Who was the first actress to win an Oscar?

e) Who gave up her job as a secretary to make her Broadway singing debut in *Girl Crazy*?

f) Who gave up her professional singing career in 1957 and spent the next 20 years working as a hospital nurse?

g) Who had an affair with Alexander Kerensky in the 1920s and 'exposed' Kim Philby as a Communist spy to the British intelligence services before his escape from Beirut in 1963?

h) Who wrote an estimated 560 books and tracked down Ethel Le Neve, who had gone into hiding after

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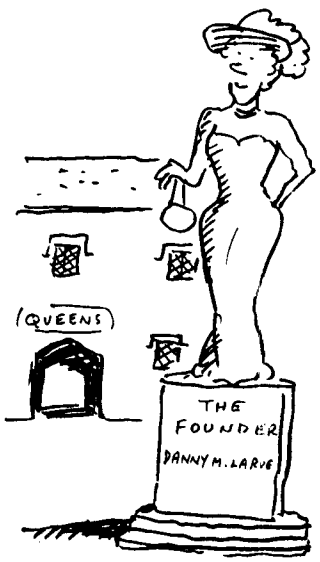
Crippen's execution?
i) Who went up to Somerville College, Oxford, in 1937 but returned to her native country four years later without a degree?
j) Who was, at five foot two inches, the smallest police officer in Britain?

Meg only

Which Margaret
a) was played by Candice Bergen in an Oscar-winning film?
b) was played by Angela Thorne in a long-running stage show?
c) founded Queens' College, Cambridge?



d) endowed St John's College, Cambridge?
e) was pacified by Basingstoke?
f) would never walk down Lime Street any more?
g) repulsed the devil in her dungeon?
h) won an Oscar for *The VIPs*?
i) wrote *Culture and Commitment*?
j) wrote *The Middle Ground*?

Title deeds

1: Who was
a) The Greatest Novel Reader in the World?
b) The Last of the Red-Hot Mamas?
c) The She-Wolf of France?
d) The Princess of Parallelograms?
e) The Queen of Hearts?
f) The Widow at Windsor?
g) The Swedish Nightingale?
h) Little Sure-Shot?

2: What was
a) Scavenger's Daughter?
b) The Daughter of Peneus?
c) The Mother of Presidents?
d) The Mistress of the World?
e) The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street?
f) Our Lady of the Snows?
g) Brown Bess?
h) Big Bertha?

In the nursery

a) Whose consumption of dairy products *al fresco* was interrupted?
b) Whose high-cholesterol consumption complemented her husband's diet?
c) Whose suitor promised her a diet of strawberries?
d) Whose pooch went hungry?
e) Whose beardless woolly animals of the goat family went missing?
f) Whose young beardless woolly animal of the goat family was ever-present?
g) Which Oxfordshire equestrian carried musical instruments?
h) Which perverse horticulturalist grew musical instruments?

Naming names

1: Which women began life with the following names?
a) Margaret Hookham
b) Margaret Roberts
c) Barbara Betts
d) Barbara Deeks
e) Helen Mitchell
f) Helen Govronsky
g) Francesca von Gerber
h) Frances Gumm

2: Which women hid behind the following pseudonyms?
a) Billie Cassin
b) Christopher Crowfield
c) Frances Dean
d) Hanna Puttick
e) Jane Somers
f) Darleen O'Connor
g) Master Robinson
h) Ellen Alleyne
i) Mary Westmacott
j) Katherine Burns
k) Acton Bell
l) Charles Townsend

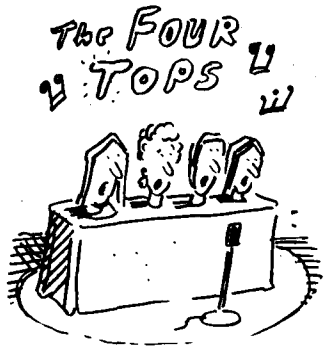
Giving voice

Which women made the following musical announcements?
a) *I Want to Be Free*
b) *I Want To Be Wanted*
c) *All I Need Is Your Sweet Lovin'*
d) *All I See Is You*
e) *Give Me An Inch*
f) *Give Me Time*

g) *Baby I'm Yours*
h) *Baby Baby My Love's All For You*
i) *He's a Rebel*
j) *He's So Fine*
k) *He's The Greatest Dancer*
l) *Come And Stay With Me*
m) *Come Back and Finish What You Started*
n) *Come Back and Shake Me*

Groupies

What have the following in common?
a) Dorothea Douglass, Maria Bueno, Lottie Dod, Louise Brough
b) Countess Renata Zerkowski, Anna Stravinska, Olga Demiroff, Olga Seminoff
c) Princess Diana, George Sand, Debbie Harry, Amy Johnson
d) Felix, Genetrix, Plagiaria, Obsequens
e) Florence Hancock, Margaret Bondfield, Marie Patterson
f) Catherine Howard, Charlotte



Corday, Valeria Messalina, Lady Jane Grey
g) Mother Teresa, Gracie Allen, Shirley Williams, Maureen O'Hara

Treble chance

Please name
a) the three Merry Wives of Windsor
b) the Three Little Maids From School

c) the Three Sisters
d) the three Gabor Sisters
e) the three Andrews Sisters
f) the three Boswell Sisters
g) the three Graces
h) the three harpies
i) the three Fates
j) the three Furies
k) the three original Supremes

A-wooing

To which women were the following lines addressed?
a) Drink to me only with thine eyes, / And I will pledge with mine; / Or leave a kiss but in the cup/And I'll not look for wine.
b) Were you a prefect and head of your dormit'ry?
Were you a hockey girl, tennis or gym?
Who was your favourite? Who had a crush on you?
Which were the baths where they taught you to swim?
c) When I am sad and weary, / When I think all hope has gone, / When I walk along High Holborn / I think of you with nothing on.

d) Give me a kiss, add to that kiss a score;/Then to that twenty, add an hundred more;/ A thousand to that hundred; so kiss on,/To make that thousand up a million.

Castaways

On that mythical desert island who would have
a) worn silk underwear to listen to 'Pass the Dutchie' by Musical Youth or to read the *Bhagavad-Gita*?
b) made her coffee with condensed milk before settling down with *Anna Karenina* accompanied by the 'Voice of the Stars'?
c) painted water colours to the sound of Holst?
d) gazed upon pictures of her children when not consulting her survival manual or listening to the Emperor Concerto?
e) listened to herself alone while encouraging a suntan and dreaming of French food?
f) driven up and down the beach in a yellow Lamborghini with Boito's *Mefistofele* on the stereo?
g) planted sycamore trees beneath which to listen to Schubert or Dinah Washington while brushing up on Homer?
h) read her own autobiography to the tick of her mother's ormolu clock?
i) kept her teeth really clean to the strains of Cimarosa?
j) sipped Lapsang soochong while reading Proust with Elgar or Noel Coward in the background?

Answers on p.64

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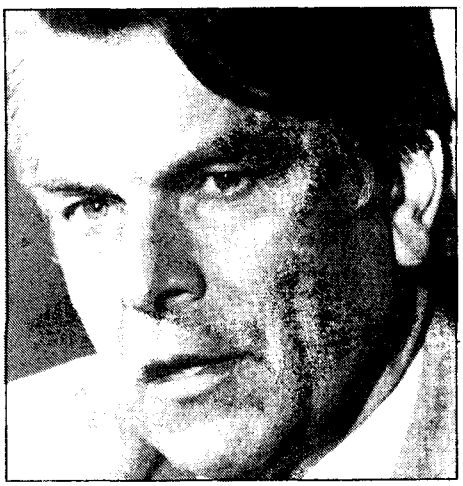
'IF I RULED THE WORLD...'

WE OFFERED various public figures imaginary power to issue an autocratic decree in answer to this question: 'If you had the power to institute a single specific reform, what would it be?' Naturally we hedged it about with cavils and caveats. They weren't allowed to replace nuclear weapons, capitalism or unhappiness with socialism or universal love. They could, however, be serious and decide to halve class sizes in schools or close down TV for one day a week. They could be more oblique and banish teenage spots in order to produce one generation of slightly better adjusted adults (**David Jones**, *NS* Advertising Dept) or they could use their power to banish what is obviously a personal irritation to **Michael Frayn** who would pass 'a law requiring that

where a door used by the general public has more than one leaf either all the leaves must be locked or all the leaves must be unlocked'.

Margaret Thatcher and **Neil Kinnock** declined to loose the bonds of democracy and said they were, respectively, too busy governing the country and opposing *her* method of doing it to reply, but **N.D. Mahmood**, Chairman of Waltham Forest Police Monitoring Group, stepped Statesmanlike into the breach: 'Every adult person in the country should spare a few hours a month for community work. I would like to see every unemployed person devoting some time regularly for community work with any community organisation. This would improve the quality of life for those in need and make the fortunate and powerful in society aware of others' suffering.'

'I take it as read that you mean NOW, i.e. not when in government in 1987!', replied **David Owen**, Leader of the SDP, 'in which case I'd employ legislation to bring about a referendum



on the desirability of introducing a more proportional voting system.' And **David Steel**, Leader of the Liberal Party, said he would institute the building of a new Palace of Westminster large enough to house everybody within the legal requirements of the Factories, Shops & Office Acts passed within it but not applying to it. This building would preferably be well north of London.

Joan Ruddock, Chairperson of CND, was sorry that she couldn't join in the slightly

frivolous aspect of our question since it would not be 'appropriate to say anything less than total nuclear disarmament by Britain'; as was **Iris Murdoch**, the author/philosopher: 'I funk

your question, it's too difficult!' No help from the winner of the Booker Prize this year, **Anita Brookner**, who thought it 'a marvellous idea, but at the moment I have nothing to suggest'; and the also ran **J.G. Ballard**, who was so stunned at being referred to as 'a public figure' after years in the wilderness that his breath was taken too far away to pronounce.

Our last two public figures amply made up for the reticence of others. **Dave Matzdorf**, lead singer of 'Reckless Pedestrians', the latest

cult group for the cognoscenti, wished us well for our 'Chanukah' page thus: 'I would make anti-sexist sex education a compulsory part of schooling. How much more radical energy and creativity could be made available were women not conditioned into accepting passivity, economic dependence and child-rearing as their lot? How many twisted personalities, who would otherwise channel their frustration into dominance, power-hunger and racist/sexist beliefs, would have their ignorance just that little bit lifted, their feelings of inadequacy just that little bit soothed, their anger and jealousy defused? I think this change would reach across sex, class and race and would have something to offer every child. When do we start?'

But by far the most fighting talk came from **Wilmette Brown**, Joint Co-ordinator of the

King's Cross Women's Centre, Co-opted member of the GLC Women's Committee and ex-'60s Black Panther, author of *Black Women and the Peace Movement* (Falling Wall Press, 1984, £2.95). 'Every woman in the world, Black and white, older and younger, with or without children, married or single, with or without visible disabilities, lesbian and non-lesbian, immigrant and non-immigrant, with or without a job outside the home, should be paid, as of right, a living wage for physical and emotional housework, and this money is to come from the military budgets of all governments, East and West, North and South, thus revolutionising the relations between women and government, women and men and women and women, and abolishing the nuclear State.'

Jane Thomas

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Christine Roche

The lie

Simon Burt

GREG HAMILL told the lie at the beginning of the summer.

They were sitting, James Cassidy and he, in a bar on the Bayswater Road. It was a Wednesday, and lunchtime. Greg Hamill was complaining.

I don't know why, he said, I keep on coming to this place. It's not as if anything happens.

Oh, I don't know, James Cassidy said. That one's not bad. The one in blue. Lighting his cigarette. He's not bad.

No, Greg Hamill said. Not for me. Too tall. Too wide. I don't like the moustache.

The man in blue shook out his match and leaned on the bar. Cigarette between his lips he looked straight at Greg Hamill and smiled. Greg Hamill looked at his beer.

American I would say, James Cassidy said. Judging by the jeans. And the teeth.

Greg Hamill looked up from his beer. The man in blue smiled again, picked up his drink, and crossed to sit next to Greg Hamill.

From the conversation that followed these are some of the facts that emerged:

The man in blue was called Paul, Paul Usher, from Cleveland, Ohio, an architecture student at UCLA, over here for four weeks as part of his summer vacation.

James Cassidy and Greg Hamill had travelled quite a bit too. In fact they were going to San Francisco at the beginning of July, to stay with James Cassidy's uncle.

The man in blue was staying in a small hotel just round the corner.

Greg Hamill found the man in blue tall, but not too tall. Wide, but not too wide. Nor was his moustache insuperably objectionable.

Also during this conversation Greg Hamill told the lie. James Cassidy didn't notice. Greg Hamill barely noticed himself. It was just one sentence among many.

Funny isn't it? James Cassidy said, while the man in blue was at the bar buying a round of drinks. The way people become more attractive the more available they are.

After the next drink James Cassidy excused himself, and went to sit at the other end of the room. Greg Hamill and the man in blue talked till closing time, then went round the corner to the man in blue's hotel.

Over the next few days things proceeded according to their pattern: Greg Hamill and the man in blue ran into each other on the street, bumped into each other in bars, and smiled at their good fortune. At the end of the first week they made a date, missed each other, and met again after a flurry of phone calls. By the end of the second week they were seeing each other every day.

The man in blue shaved off his moustache.

On the morning of the Monday of the third week the lie surfaced in a manner that startled Greg Hamill considerably. He choked on his coffee, hung up as naturally as possible on the man in blue, and went so hurriedly to see James Cassidy that he left a

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cigarette burning in the ashtray.

James Cassidy opened the door in his dressing gown.

I've got to talk to you, Greg Hamill said.

James Cassidy made coffee while Greg Hamill fidgeted on his stool and bit his fingernails. When the coffee was made James Cassidy sat down opposite Greg Hamill and lit a cigarette.

All right, he said. Go ahead.

I can't, Greg Hamill said. I can't tell you.

And he got up and left. James Cassidy finished his cigarette and drank both cups of coffee. It was Friday morning before he heard from Greg Hamill again.

I'm sorry, Greg Hamill said. I've got to see you. I've got to talk to you. I don't know what to do.

They met at the Round Pond and walked through Kensington Gardens.

Isn't it awful? Greg Hamill said. When you're a reasonably honest and reliable person, but you sometimes tell lies.

James Cassidy agreed that it was awful.

I mean, Greg Hamill said. You don't get anything for nothing in this life. So you just pretend to have a bit more to give than you really have. And there you are.

Maybe, James Cassidy said, if you just told me what you were talking about.

It's Paul, Greg Hamill said. He's leaving next Friday. He's bought a ticket to Hawaii.

James Cassidy waited.

He's always wanted to go, Greg Hamill said. And now he's going back to California via Hawaii. He's going to stay with friends of mine.

You haven't, James Cassidy said, got any friends on Hawaii. You haven't even been to Hawaii.

I said I did, Greg Hamill said. That day in the pub when we first met I said I did. I don't know what to do. The only person I know from Hawaii is a trick I met here in London years ago. Paul found his name in my address book. I just embroidered a bit. I said we were old friends.

I see, James Cassidy said.

I was just showing off, that's all, Greg Hamill said. Things just built up and up. They got out of hand. He thinks we're practically best friends. He thinks I've written, for God's sake, to say he's coming. What on earth am I going to do?

You could always forget it, James Cassidy said. After all we're going away next Saturday.

I thought of that, Greg Hamill said. His ticket is for San Francisco. He says he's coming to see us there after he's been to Hawaii.

Oh dear, James Cassidy said.

I thought I'd say we were only going to be in San Francisco for a few days, Greg Hamill said. Then we're going to see your uncle who lives out of town somewhere. I don't know where.

Maybe, James Cassidy said, I ought to be unavailable for a few days. If you think it will work.

Isn't it a mess? Greg Hamill said. I can't sleep. I can't eat. I feel sick all the time.

You could say, James Cassidy said, that they were an affair. These friends of yours. They wrote to you to say that they've split up. And they've moved. And they don't want to see anyone. I could just not answer the phone, Greg Hamill said.

Or you could tell the truth, James Cassidy said. You could say you made it all up.

Oh God, Greg Hamill said. The first decent person I meet in ages, and I have to go and mess it up.

The next Friday Greg Hamill and James Cassidy went to see the man in blue off at Heathrow. James Cassidy, who had been unavailable for a week, wondered where exactly they were seeing him off to, but felt it would be indiscreet to ask.

At the check-in the man in blue talked about how much he was looking forward to Hawaii. He had always wanted to go to Hawaii, and here he was, going.

James Cassidy looked at Greg Hamill, but Greg Hamill was busy with the man in blue's bags.

While they waited for the flight, they sat over coffee and Danish pastries, and James Cassidy prattled of neutral matters. Greg Hamill sniffed and looked unhappy, which may or may not have been due, as he said, to the fact that he hated goodbyes, even temporary ones.

At the word Temporary James Cassidy looked up and tried and failed again to catch Greg Hamill's eye.

When the flight was called they went and stood outside the departure lounge. The man in blue shook James Cassidy's hand, and kissed Greg Hamill, and said he would see them both in San Francisco. Again James Cassidy tried to catch Greg Hamill's eye, but Greg Hamill was wiping away a tear, and James Cassidy had to turn away.

The man in blue kissed Greg Hamill again and told him not to be sad. They would see each other again soon. Then he disappeared into the departure lounge.

This time James Cassidy did manage to catch Greg Hamill's eye. He decided not to say anything. □

The clock

Simon Burt

THE NEXT DAY we went on this outing. At breakfast Ted said let's go on this outing. We could call Stan and Renee, they'll come too. We'll go to Salisbury, look around, have a meal, make a day of it.

I've always hated outings. I mean, all you do is go to places. I live in a place, right? Salisbury's just a place, right? I mean, why just change places?

We've got stale, Ted said. We don't do anything. The way we used to. We used to go out. We don't go out anymore.

I didn't say anything. I didn't want to go. What's in Salisbury that I haven't got at home?

Come on, Joanie, Ted said. Don't take it so hard. Don't take it so personally. It's just one of those things. Come on. We'll go out for the day. Take your mind off.

You're meant to have fun on outings. Other people have fun on outings. Ted and Stan and Renee have fun on outings. I just trail around. They do daft things. They sit on the pavement and eat ice-cream. I just smile and hang around till it's time to go home. I'd rather stay at home.

Ted phoned Stan and Renee and we went to Salisbury. It took two and a half hours to get there. We parked in the market place and looked round the shops. It was a hot, hot day. We poked around the streets.

What a pretty town, Ted kept on saying. What a pretty town. Joanie, wouldn't you love to live in a town like this?

We had lunch in this old hotel, just off the market place.

We ought to see Stonehenge, Renee said. Now we're here. We can't come all this way and not see Stonehenge.

There's the cathedral too, Ted said. We've got to see the cathedral.

We went to Stonehenge after lunch. I fell asleep in the car on the way there. When we arrived, Ted and Stan and Renee went off to look at the stones. I stayed in the car and slept a bit more. It really was hot.

Then we drove back to Salisbury and parked in the market square again and went to look at the cathedral.

It was cool inside the cathedral. It was full of light and air and dead people.

They've got Magna Carta in here, Stan said. We ought to look at Magna Carta.

We walked around a bit. Renee had steel tips on her heels and they clattered. Stan kept shushing her and telling her she was too fat, she walked too heavily. In the end she took her shoes off.

You can't take your shoes off in church, Stan said.

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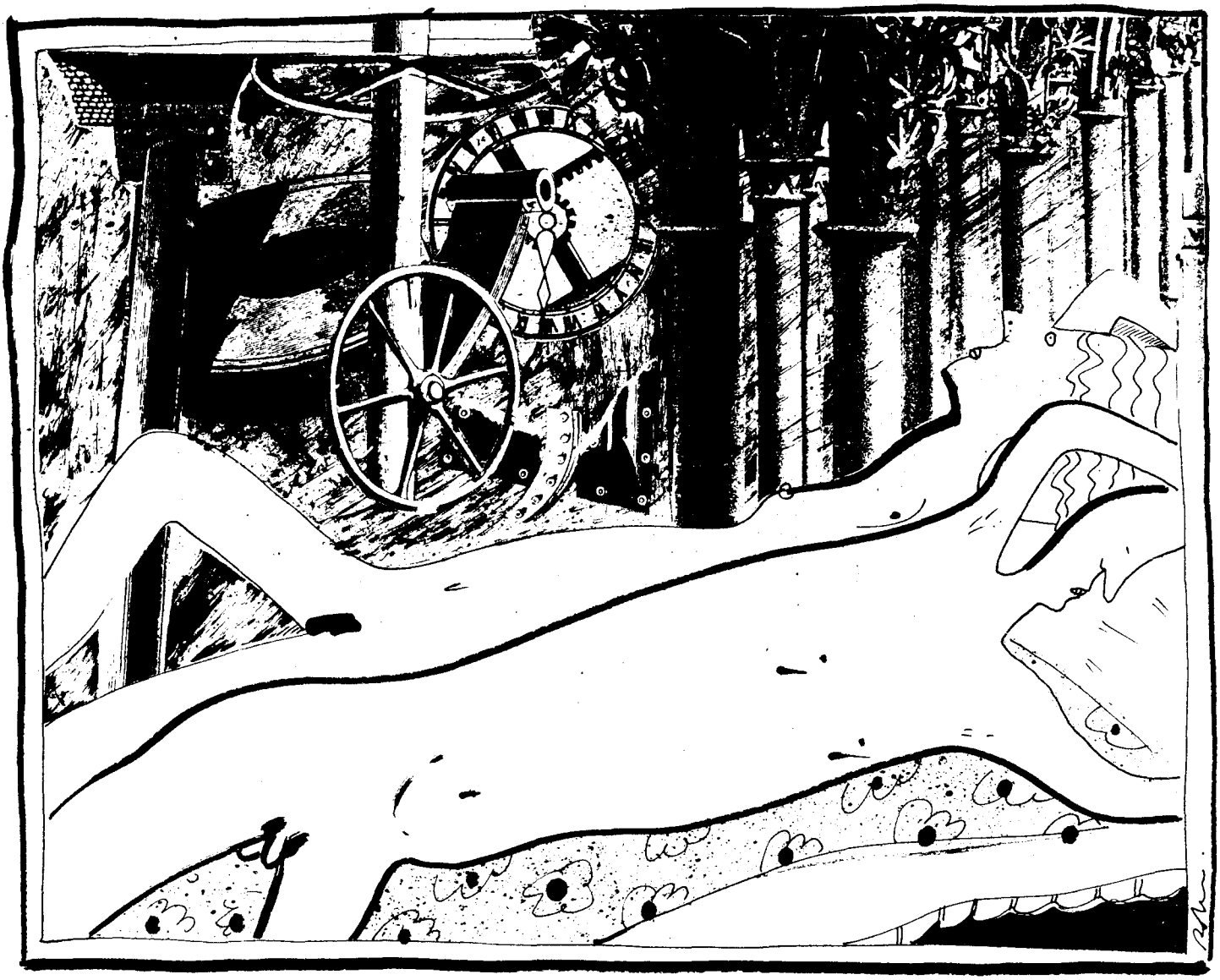

Christine Roche

Can't I though? Renee said. What do you care about church. First time you've seen the inside of one in years.

In one of the aisles of the cathedral they've got this clock. It isn't a clock really. Just the works. It's big. A big, square metal frame with cogs and weights and things, and a huge, long loop of rope that goes way up into the roof to move the hands on the clock in the tower.

I sat down to look at the clock.

Come on, Joanie, they all said. We're going to look at Magna Carta.

It was a solid frame. The cogs and wheels moved very slowly.

It's an old clock this, I said.

Come on, Joanie, Ted said. The others want to look at Magna Carta.

You go, I said. I'm going stay here for a bit.

No matter how hard I looked I couldn't see the rope move. It was a wide open sort of machine. Just a few simple pieces of moving metal. Thunk, thunk, it went. Thunk, thunk, thunk.

Then Ted came back and sat next to me and put his arm round my shoulder.

All right, Joanie? he said. How's my Joanie?

Then Stan and Renee came back.

All right? Stan said.

Joanie's all right, Ted said. Aren't you, Joanie?

I've had an idea, Stan said. Why don't we stay over? We could have dinner at the hotel. And stay the night. And go on home tomorrow.

I'm game, Ted said. Good idea, eh Joanie? Make a night of it.

We haven't got any things, I said.

Good old Joanie, Stan said. Always the practical one. Tell you what. You and Renee go and buy toothbrushes and things. And Ted and I will go and book a room.

All the time Renee and I were in the shops I kept on hoping. Maybe there wouldn't be any room at the hotel, or it would be too expensive or something.

We just bought toothbrushes, Renee didn't think we'd need anything else.

Ted and Stan had booked rooms by the time we got there. We had tea and sandwiches and cream cakes and went and walked round the town again. Renee bought a new dress and a pair of summer shoes.

Stan got fresh with Renee over dinner. He kept on grabbing her leg and putting his hand up her skirt under the table.

Stan, she said, Stop it, Stan. People will see.

I can't help it, Stan said. It's the hotel. I always get randy in hotels. Just wait till I get you upstairs, eh?

It was a big dinner with wine and things. We had liqueurs afterwards. Renee got the giggles and Stan took her up to bed.

Soon after that Ted and I went up too. I got straight into bed and curled up. Then Ted got in and pulled me round to face him. He cuddled up close. I could feel his limp damp thing flop against my hand. My head got buried between his neck and the pillow and I couldn't breathe very well.

There, there, he said. My Joanie. Night night, Joanie.

He kissed me and turned over. Soon he was asleep. I lay there thinking.

What I don't understand, I thought, is why it's always the same. The way people woo you gently, gently, gently out of your shell, and then step on you. That's what I don't understand.

I couldn't sleep. I thought of the clock. That big, old clock. That was some clock. That clock was really something. □

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1985

Basil Ransome-Davies

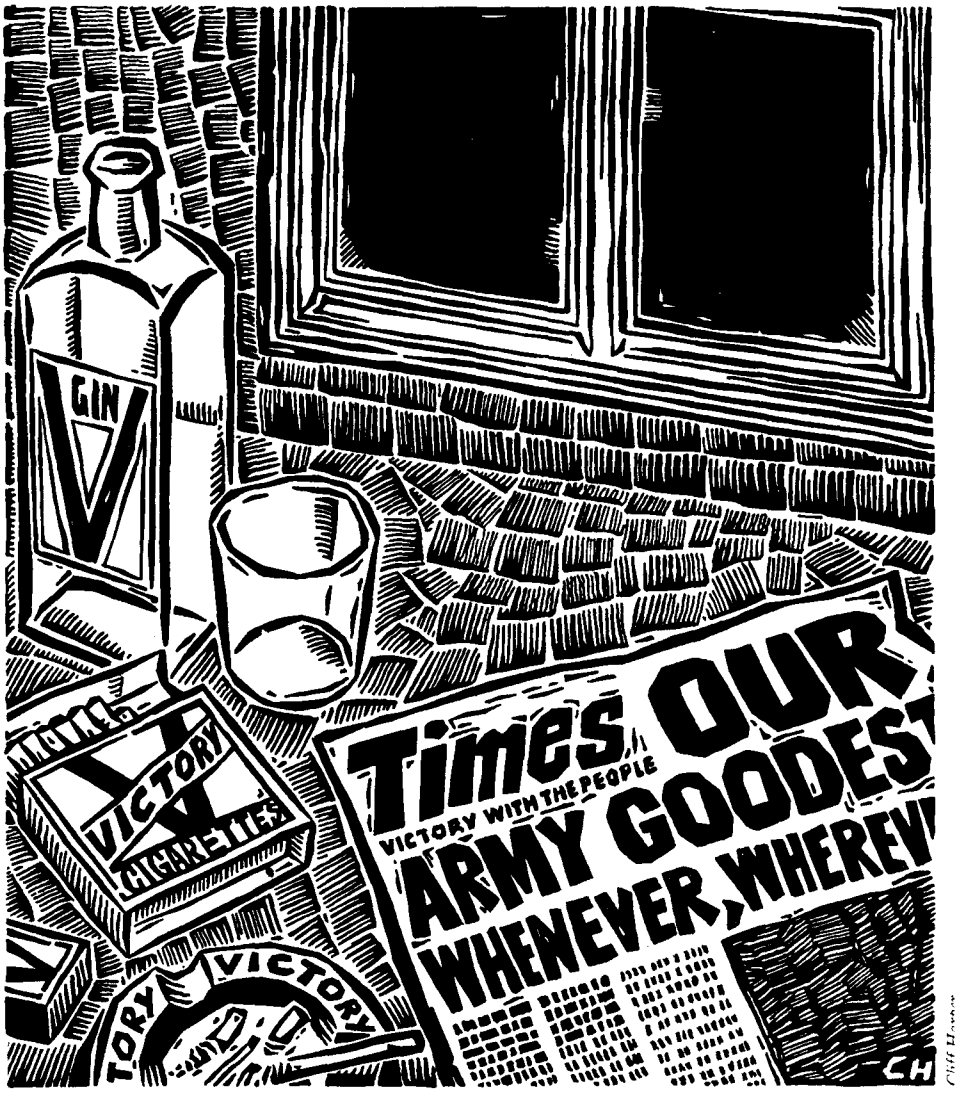
AS WINSTON left the Chestnut Tree Café for the New Year Victory Parade his stomach tightened with a mixture of excitement and calm. The gin that had settled in his veins numbed and soothed him, while his own triumph of the day — exposing a pimply, lavatory-hogging young Minitrue clerk as an agent of the sub-human Eurasian enemy — almost made him tremble with pride. The giant posters of Big Brother that stared down along the route to Victory Square, shutting out the ghastly rubble-strewn sites where Eurasian rockets had exploded, seemed to smile on him with a personal benevolence.

This was his Airstrip One, he reflected. It had bred him, nourished him, given a form and purpose to his jelly-like being. An individual could never be a unit, only a functioning part of a greater unit. What proved that better than the invincible army whose home-based detachments were assembling in the square? Without the deep, binding force of Big Brother's will and understanding they would be a collection of useless atoms: like animals, like the proles.

The huge bonfire was proof, too. Shivering around the last windy corner, Winston saw it massed above the murmuring crowd like a fat rocket sitting on its base. It was festooned with bound Eurasian prisoners — actual ones, not dummies as in other years — and at midnight it would ignite in a roaring blaze. Thousands of litres of fuel had been donated during Sacrifice Week. Winston himself had led the drive in Victory Mansions. He had watched the unforced love in the eyes of his fellow-tenants as they eagerly gave up precious winter heating. He was sure the Parade would be a magnificent success. In fact it already was. He had completed the following day's *Times* report before starting his evening of gin and chess. He had let himself be more expressive than usual when describing the screams of the prisoners.

* * *

'DOUBLEPLUSGOOD WIN BY OCEANIA AND EURASIAN FRIENDS. BIG EASTASIAN DEATHPILE AFTER LANDFIGHT. OUR ARMY GOODEST WHENEVER, WHEREVER.' Winston scrupulously checked the bulletin, then furled



it and popped it into the mouth of a pneumatic tube. He went back to feeding the memory hole with documents, but its mechanism seemed wilfully slow. In a panicky sweat he shovelled in an extra-thick sheaf. It wedged in the grating, as though it had choked the entire flue. Winston cursed and reached for a cigarette, but his hand shook and the dry grains of tobacco emptied themselves on his desk.

He knew what the cause was: not a failure of the system, not his wretched nerves, but sabotage. Eastasian wreckers had struck at key points, damaging power lines and generators. That was why the memory hole worked sluggishly. That was why there was no relief from the freakish spring weather that had turned Minitrue into a hell of overheated air and snapped tempers. It was worse than bombs. And there was endless thirst since the daily water ration had been set at 25 centilitres. Eastasian fifth columnists had poured horrific chemicals into reservoirs. *Well-poisoners*: Winston's next editorial began to write itself in his head.

Irritably, he pushed at the bundle of jammed papers. Sooner or later they would descend, then the cleared passage would breathe out hot exhausts to make his task even more intolerable.

All at once his hand held a picture. Unmistakably it showed men in military uniform, their faces deformed by pain and terror, fastened like dolls to a crackling pyre. They were figures of absolute helplessness, not the supermen who had just won a battle for Ingsoc. His hand moved so fast that he sliced a knuckle on the metal grid. But the incriminating object stuck: a photo of Eurasian — no; Winston practised thought control — *Eastasian* soldiers or, if it would go down, nothing at all. As Winston pressed the crumpled print against the hole, waiting for his bowels to collapse or the telescreen to shout, he had a flickering vision of some alternative reality familiar yet beyond his experience, like a story told to a child. Then with a *whoosh* the evidence vanished and his mind was filled by an image of a gin bottle. Gin: warm, sticky and nauseous as his own sweat, but promising oblivion.

* * *

Winston licked the rim of the gin-glass and gazed at his grimy window. He could detect

THE ANCIENT WISDOM

There is a tradition that behind all the religions and philosophies, there is a vein of persisting truths which never change. They relate to the very nature of the Cosmos, both on the vast and the minute scale. We are in and of that nature. Makes you think — Yes?

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nothing in the black-out, though it was easy to visualise the clumps of rotting leaves pasted together with dog excrement and the scarred, blistered housefronts. He had been frightened to the edge of sickness by a dream.

In the dream O'Brien had shown him, over Winston's whimpering protests, paragraphs from Goldstein's book which he had not managed to read before his arrest and re-education. He had sworn he would shut his mind against the heretical ravings but now he could remember nothing but Goldstein's words, as precisely as if they were bursting out of the telescreen in the corner.

> How far can we see into the future? And what ideas will help us understand? We know that a ruling class seeks to hold power eternally. Hence it tries to establish that its power has always existed and comes from nature, not from the struggle with other classes. It fosters the so-called natural knowledge crystallised in common sense. To live by common sense means to accept the truth of power. This truth says 'You can't change human nature'. It says 'Men are men and women are women'. It says 'We must be realistic'. It is a truth confirmed by experience: the experience of slavery.
>
> Every instinct is re-moulded in the crucible of state authority. Even feelings beneficial in themselves — the joy of birth; romantic love; attachment to community or country — become devices to trap the people in inertia or submission. Pleasure is catered for, yet it is uncreative pleasure. It stands agape at fantastic spectacles and cringes from freedom. The human appetite for enjoyment may be natural, but it is the lying trick of an oligarchy to twist our natural birthright into the shape of its own designs.
>
> More than this, though we may be threatened with the death of civilisation, our most immediate and certain opponent is the civilisation of death. The cancer that incites a slave to howl for the torture and killing of slaves in a foreign land, to blame the poor for the pain of poverty, or to find plots and scapegoats among society's outcasts, is the projection of a tyranny that both fears and secretly wishes its own death.
>
> One thing is certain. It is no longer enough to call the masses to revolt in a spirit of scientific duty, directed from above. The history of Ingsoc alone demonstrates that. Instead, to the logic of a revolutionary scheme must be added subversive desires, new sources of pleasure, irony, puns, insubordinate styles and, above all, imagination.

'Imagination!' sneered O'Brien, offhandedly sliding the final page of *1985* into the memory hole. 'You see? It all boils down to some outworn humanist concept. That's the trouble with the old-fashioned political novel. When it mirrors reality it makes you despair. But if it ends on a note of hope it convinces no-one. Not that I'm waving the flag for post-modernism. I believe we've taught some of those assholes more about the death of the author than they wanted to know.'

He saluted the crimestop group's appreciative chuckles with a mock-modest gesture, then resumed.

'Let's face it, literature sucks. But at least I've put you in the picture about Oldthink and its typical forms. Now watch this. It's the latest telefilm of —' he deftly consulted his notes — 'Eurasian troops getting what they asked for. This time they're not just on the bonfire, kids. They *are* the bonfire. And when we've wiped out their evil empire we'll go on till the world is clean. Big Brother is with us. Rejoice!' □

The pleasures of reading 1984

The question asked of contributors was not 'which did you find to be the most worthy book published in 1984?' but 'which book/s gave you most pleasure during 1984?' Writers were, therefore, free to choose anything they had read this year, regardless of publication date. The responses (see below) were various and wide-ranging.

I picked up Eleanor Farjeon's **Edward Thomas: The Last Four Years** (Oxford paperback) at the newsagents, sadly — and shockingly — remaindered for £1. Her loving recollections of Edward and Helen, woven in among the many letters he wrote to her, have the same integrity and quiet passion as Thomas's poems.

M.H. Ryle

Labour & Love: An Oral History of the Brass Band Movement by Arthur R. Taylor (Elm Tree Books, £9.95). Brass band music, with its imperial and religious themes and lugubrious arrangements, invariably leaves me cold, yet I found this study both rich and fascinating, a detailed portrait of one of the great popular cultural movements of the past 100 years. By turns anecdotal, learned and critical, it describes rather more than just a history of one kind of music; it describes a whole industrial culture and politics too. Grimethorpe miners have most recently been portrayed as an ignorant rabble in the current dispute, yet such illustrious modern composers as Birtwistle, Musgrave and Hans Werner Henze have rewritten original compositions for the renowned, musically self-educated colliery band.

Ken Worpole

Many years ago a penniless student friend of mine worked for three weeks in a Chicago massage parlour to make enough money for a weekend in bed in the city's most expensive hotel. With Proust. Well, all three volumes of. I don't have the energy for any of that, but I have enjoyed more than other books this year Penguin's **Swann's Way**. Real Proust-fiends will hate such spinelessness. Never mind. You've always meant to, never have, so start here. It's the best-ever close examination of motive. The Moncrieff-Kilmartin translation is wonderful.

Jonathan Mirsky

For wit, intelligence, subtlety, detail, empathy and sheer zest, Hilary Spurling's final volume of her biography, **Secrets of a Woman's Heart: The Later Life of I. Compton-Burnett 1920-1969** (Hodder, £15). For all the above, plus scholarship, Peter Dronke's **Women Writers of the Middle Ages** (Cambridge, £27.50 & £10.50).

Alison Hennegan

Whenever I open a book by Stanley Elkin I know it will dazzle me with many of the qualities I relish most in good fiction: invention, passion, wit, excess, linguistic pyrotechnics, energy. The novellas of **Searches and Seizures** more than meet these expectations. Why isn't Elkin better known in Britain?

Stephen Brook

The Collected Prose of Elizabeth Bishop (Chatto, £12.95): brilliant, shrewd, indispensable; great prose by a great poet. **The New Testament in Scots** translated by W.L. Lorimer (Southside Publishers, Ltd., Edinburgh, £17.50): a great version of a good book; its effect is like reading Marquez, only better; magic realism has nothing on this.

Craig Raine

Ronald Fraser's **In Search of a Past** (Verso, £15 & £3.95), a radical historian's scrupulous self-investigation, combining psychoanalysis and an oral history of his country-house childhood, impressed and moved me. So did two brilliant imaginative novels, Angela Carter's **Nights at the Circus** (Chatto, £8.95) and J.G. Ballard's **Empire of the Sun** (Gollancz, £8.95) — strange worlds made real and recognisable by writers I hugely admire.

Ursula Owen

Cult novel, it may be, but I'm afraid it is my cult. Umberto Eco's **The Name of the Rose** (Picador, £2.95) with its densely woven texture of heresy, scholarship and hellish deeds in labyrinthine libraries appeals to all the worst instincts developed in a lifetime devoted to detective fiction and erudite esoterica. A box of delights.

Peter Wilsher

Granta 10: Travel Writing (Penguin, £3.50): more than an excellent taster, it's the finest prose anthology for years. In landscape, dialogue, characterisation, wit these travellers are leagues ahead of most current novelists. Theroux, Chatwin

outdo their fictions; and with chummy O'Hanlon, astute Lewis, playful Raban, ironic Morris, this

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selection is excellent company. *Granta* continues to delight and dumbfound its readers.

Bill Greenwell

No doubt at all about Beatrix Campbell's **Wigan Pier Revisited** (Virago, £3.95). Funniest book of the year was a reprint, E.F. Benson's **Paying Guests** (Hogarth, £3.95); best biography was Andrew Field's life of Djuna Barnes **The Formidable Miss Barnes** (Secker, £12.95); best autobiography **Barbara Pym** (Macmillan, £12.95) and best novel — Booker be damned — Keith Waterhouse's **Thinks** (Michael Joseph, £8.95).

Anne Smith

This year I *re*-read, and the book I enjoyed most was Thomas Pynchon's quest-thriller **The Crying of Lot 49**; In fact, I re-read it four or five times. First published in 1966, it remains a very Sixties product: spaced out, paranoid, a comic-strip California detective story laced with science fiction and plausible magic. Will Oedipa Maas solve the riddle of the universe? By the author of *Gravity's Rainbow*.

Derek Mahon

The Abolition by Jonathan Schell (Picador, £2.50). A high visionary work, containing one of the great sentences of this century: 'If we are attacked with nuclear weapons, I *want* the retaliation to be a phone call.' At last someone has said it. For me, this is the book of the decade.

Christopher Priest

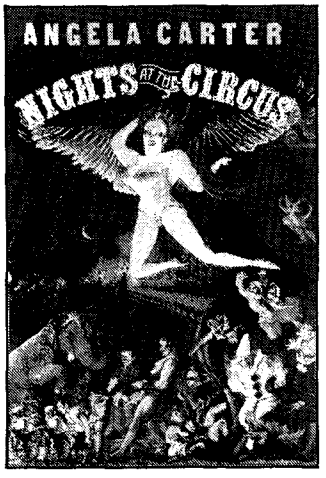
Howard Jacobson's second novel, **Peeping Tom** (Chatto, £8.95) contained less broad farce than his 1983 debut, *Coming from Behind*, but he is still the funniest contemporary English writer, combining Jewish self-deprecation in the manner of Philip Roth with a bitingly jaundiced view of the world of lit. crit., represented in this book by the Thomas Hardy groupies.

Michael Leapman

My book of the year is Joyce Appleby's **Capitalism and a New Social Order** (New York University Press). Ostensibly about the emergence of Jeffersonian democracy in the United States in the 1790s, it is also about the subtle links between economics, ideology and politics. It sweeps across the 17th and 18th centuries and across the Atlantic: a quarry of ideas.

Christopher Hill

Pleasure, eh? In fifty words. Novel: Angela Carter's



Nights at the Circus; tickled me pink. Poems: Tony Harrison, **Selected Poems**; they're good *and* they rhyme. Politics, Bea Campbell, **Wigan Pier Revisited**; an unpleasure, really, but unforgettable. Pictures: Steve Bell's **If . . . Only Again**; what else? Children's: E.B. White's **Charlotte's Web**; a classic. Theory...but I've run out of words.

Anthony Barnett

The Christian Watt Papers (Paul Harris, £8.95) As a Scot I'm proudly excited by this East coast herring-gutter, handsome, intelligent, acutely aware of mid-19th-century injustice and oppression, speaking her mind to the upper classes, often liking them personally, always in top spirits, making us see, taste and smell everything in her tough, fascinating life.

Naomi Mitchison

Acid test: will the pleasure of first reading be remembered? Craig Raine's **Rich** (Faber, £5.95 & £2.95) will linger longest with me. Another father-dominated book, **H.G. Wells** by Anthony West (Hutchinson, £12.95), partisan, slapdash, nevertheless vibrated more powerfully than work from Wells himself and Beatrice Webb in this Fabian centenary. I lament Stephen Koss who cannot now add to his **Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain** (Hamish Hamilton) and salute Katherine Follett (Beaton) who produced a fascinating study of the Atlantis legend without 'benefit' of a publisher.

Phillip Whitehead

This year brought me the third volume of S.D. Goitein's riveting panorama of everyday life in 10th- to 12th-century Cairo, as revealed by the Geniza papers. Packed away in a storeroom by the Jewish community of that time and place, thousands of documents have happily survived. Goitein's **A Mediterranean Society** (University of California Press) pieces their story together. Wonderful.

Basil Davidson

No doubt at all about my book for 1984. It is **John Clare**, edited by Eric Robinson and David Powell and published by Oxford in paperback at £4.95. Not a collected but a wide-ranging selection of the prose and the incomparable poetry which blessedly keeps to Clare's spellings and methods of punctuation.

John Lucas

Saints and Society: The Worlds of Christendom 1000-1700 by Donald Weinstein and Rudolph Bell (University of Chicago, £21.25). A scholarly, sometimes hilariously scatological read, telling us, for instance, that the chamber-pot of the Sienese St Giovanni Columbini emitted such a fragrant odour after his death that 'a young woman took some of its contents to apply to her facial disfigurement, whereupon the fragrance disappeared and was replaced by normal odour.'

James Bentley

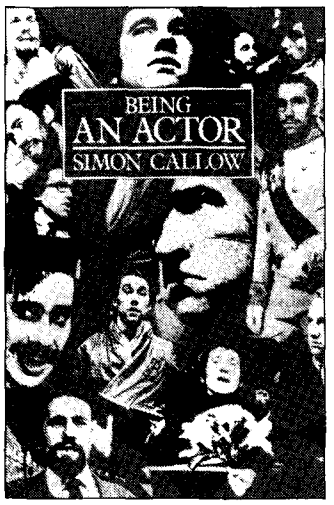
Last year Owen Dudley Edwards, damn him, told that 'he thought' that the first reference to 'two plus two equals five' was in **Tristram Shandy**. It took me seven hours to find. But this year I've re-read it. Exquisite pleasure! But for keen and serious intellectual pleasure, George Kateb's **Hannah Arendt: Politics, Conscience and Evil** (Martin Robertson/Oxford £19.50). She is the only great political thinker of our times.

Bernard Crick

In a year of adventurous fiction, Angela Carter's **Nights at the Circus** (Chatto, £8.95) was still the most exciting I read. At its centre, a woman thrashes from the 19th to the 20th centuries: the waves leap for miles in all directions. For short stories, read Rebecca Brown's subtle, horribly powerful **The Evolution of Darkness** (Brilliance, £7.95 & £3.50).

Harriett Gilbert

You're not supposed to write theatrical reminiscences until you're sixty, or knighted, or both. Mr Simon Callow (35) avoided this proscription by cunningly disguising his memoirs as a cross between a manual and a manifesto. Standing up for actors and authors against directorial auteurs,



Being an Actor (Methuen, £7.95) is the best thespian read of the year by far. Roll on the KBE, and Part Two.

David Edgar

The novels of **Milan Kundera**. Boldness and comedy of his geometrical manipulations, history intervening in the fates and ideas of individuals, all put over with brilliantly analysed imagery. The tawdry awfulness of the Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia: the hero getting entangled with the wrong girl (a redhead) on the 2nd of May.

Michael Hofmann

In illness I find old books better than new ones. This is not only the year of George Orwell's last masterpiece but also the centenary of the Russian writer whose masterpiece inspired it. **We**, which Yevgeni Zamyatin wrote in 1920-21, is a far more powerful and universal satire on modern totalitarianism than *Brave New World* or *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and will last far longer. Unfortunately, the latest and best translation, by Mirra Ginsburg, is still elusive after 12 years, but the previous translation by Bernard Guilbert Guerney (Cape and Penguin) is good enough to convey the value of this key work of our century.

Nicolas Walter

The literary pleasure and the literary event of the year, I'm sure, was Milan Kundera's **The Unbearable Lightness of Being** (Faber, £9.50). But I'd like to name two novels by young writers that delighted me with their sharp insight, their nimble wit and their cunning balance of hardness and tenderness. These were **The Garden of Earthly**

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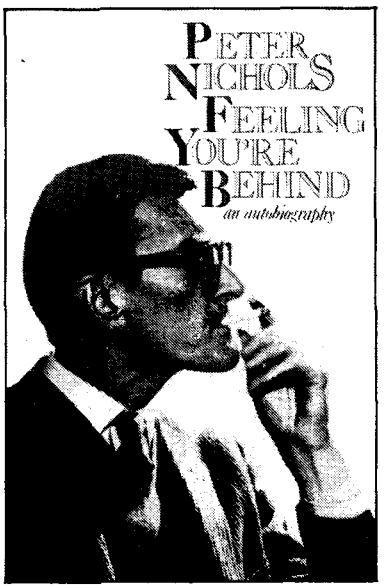
Delights by Lawson Davies (Michael Joseph, £8.95) and **Loose Connections** by Maggie Brooks (Chatto £7.95 & £3.50).

Mervyn Jones

Feeling You're Behind (Weidenfeld, £10.95) uses the same flippancy to cope with pain as characterises Peter Nichols's plays from *A Day in the Death of Joe*



Egg on. That's where this first volume of autobiography ends, with a PS on the death of his own severely spastic daughter. Amid all the novels about writing, this rings out funny, moving and true.

Paul Allen

Alasdair Gray's **1982 Janine** stands out in a good year for Scottish literature. It's a very funny, very honest novel informed by a principled commitment to socialist values (which some reviewers obtusely missed). I shall buy as many copies for gifts as I did of his previous, mind-bending *Lanark*.

Angus Calder

Winner of the team event: **Ed McBain**'s 87th precinct novels (Penguin & Pan), my belated discovery of the year. Intricate plots, incisive writing, the police procedural at its finest, especially in those cases where the Deaf Man opposes Steve Carella and the boys. Individual medallist: Gore Vidal's **Lincoln** (Heinemann, £9.95).

David Montrose

Three very different books but all in one sense or other mysteries — compulsive reading, slowly removing layer from onion-skin layer as they stalk the elusive answers to their own particular questions: Umberto Eco's **The Name of the Rose**, Ronald Fraser's **In Search of a Past** and Robertson Davies's **Deptford Trilogy** (Penguin, £4.95).

Gillian Wilce

Two translations of modern Italian classics from Carcanet: first a collection of Dino Buzzati's wonderful short stories **Restless Nights** (£7.95) and second Natalia Ginzburg's autobiographical **Family Sayings** (£7.95) which in its account of principled people battling against an evil political climate is peculiarly relevant to the English today. Also **The Selected Letters of Federico Garcia Lorca** (Marion Boyars, £10.95); Lorca's poetic genius is often revealed in the most casual of letters. And James Purdie's fine novel **Mourners Below** (Peter Owen, £8.95).

Paul Binding

Tony Harrison's **Selected Poems** (Penguin, £3.50) gives the lie to two stale but influential notions: one that English poetry is inward-looking and provincial; the other that poetic excellence and political commitment don't mix. These poems reveal how the most intimate relations are haunted by a history of violence and class divisions. They come from a powerful attentive spirit, a presence to be celebrated.

Jon Cook

Heterosexism in murderous action: computer genius Alan Turing's suicide in 1954 after being put on drugs to remove his homosexuality by a British court. Told in **Alan Turing: The Enigma** by Andrew Hodges (Burnett Books, £18). HM Customs would suppress it, only it's published in the UK.

Andrew Lumsden

The Jewel in the Crown. Salman Rushdie (school of Magic Realism after Grass and Garcia Marquez) criticised Paul Scott for borrowing a rape from E.M. Forster. He might as well have bashed *War and Peace* for borrowing a battle from history. Scott's Tolstoyan masterpiece (TV and book) kept last winter at bay.

John Spurling

Not a bumper year for dance books, but **Men Dancing** by the late Alexander Bland/John Percival (Weidenfeld, £15) adequately fills the coffee-table gap. The photographs remain riveting despite the rejoicing commentary and a terminally precious foreword by Richard Buckle. From Vestris to Schaufuss, all the glamour boys are there.

Stephanie Jordan

I haven't read many books in this difficult year, but the few I have read are still with me. My choice of books are **Staying Power** by Peter Fryer (Pluto, £9.95), Alice Walker's **In Search of Our Mother's Gardens** (Women's Press, £12.95 & £4.95), Irving Howe's **Short Shorts** and Kundera's **The Unbearable Lightness of Being**. The book which has given me no end of pleasure is Pablo Neruda's **Memoirs**, a rich and extraordinary antidote to the metallic cynicism of our times.

Ben Okri

My most delightful reading and re-reading has been Michelene Wandor's extraordinary **Gardens of Eden**: poems for Eve and Lilith (Journeyman/Playbooks), a loving, bitchy, beautiful, clever and funny poem sequence, retelling ancient stories from the *Old Testament* and elsewhere and re-presenting shiny new perspectives.

Sara Maitland

The Egoist by George Meredith. I read this with incredulity and delight. Published in 1879, it is a remarkably shrewd dissection of a marriage that thankfully doesn't quite happen. A novel of both warmth and wit, it is very good on the strengths and weaknesses of women, and contains much readers will recognise with rueful chagrin today.

Naseem Khan

I suspect I won't be the only one to say that the book which gave me the most boundless and purr-inducing pleasure was Angela Carter's **Nights at the Circus**. Its style reflected its setting — full of somersaults, clowning and death-defying leaps. If you haven't read it, do: you'll believe a woman can fly.

Francis Wheen

The Complete Yes Minister (BBC Publications, £8.75) reveals more about the realities of power — that is, what people actually get up to, as opposed to what the text books say they do — than anything else I have ever read. Like all the best books, it is both very funny and profoundly serious. No politics student, journalist, party activist, pressure-group member, town hall official, aspiring civil servant or ambitious MP should be without a well-thumbed copy.

Peter Kellner

Talks & Dialogue Saanen 1967 by J. Krishnamurti (Servire/Wassenaar) made me think for the first time about what it might be to live right now, free of the identity I construct out of fear and regret. For this I was and am grateful.

Barney Hoskyns

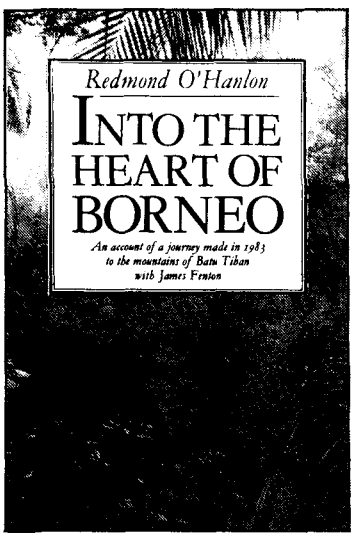
London Library AGMs once provided an opportunity to goggle at the author of 'The Wasteland' taking the chair and reading the Minutes (he made them sound like the 'Four Quartets'). Peter Ackroyd's **T.S. Eliot** offers a less theatrical close-up, separating the man from the persona, helping to explain how the poetry came about.

Charles Fox

Poplarism 1919-25: George Lansbury and the Councillors' Revolt, by Doreen Branson (Lawrence & Wishart, £7.50). If the finer points of rate support grant and the relationship of the State to subordinate legislatures leave you cold, then warm the parts of socialist nostalgia that Liverpool's Militants cannot reach by reading this fairytale of a time when politics was simple and Trotsky was Commissar of the Red Army. The Poplar councillors went to prison — where they continued to meet as a council — until the government in Westminster agreed to provide more funds for 'outdoor relief' (dole) in London's East End, which it did. Can Blunkett, Hodge and Knight pull it off this time?

John Rentoul

Impossible to separate two titles that have bracketed my reading year, both of them sheltering under the umbrella of 'travel books'. Peter Levi's **The Hill of Kronos** (Zenith, £2.95) is as good an evocation of Greece as anything by Leigh Fermor, which makes it very fine indeed; Redmond O'Hanlon's **Into the**


Redmond O'Hanlon
INTO THE HEART OF BORNEO
An account of a journey made in 1983 to the mountains of Batu Tiban with James Fenton

Heart of Borneo (Salamander Press, £10.95) is perceptive, hilarious and at the same time a serious natural-history journey into one of the last remaining unspoilt paradises.

Andrew Clements

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Raymond Tong

Gassing the badgers

A young woman sobs bitterly
into relentless television cameras
and angrily refuses to move away,
franticly clinging to the trunk of a tree
on a wintry Gloucestershire hillside.

Although sympathising with her good intentions
most viewers may feel she is over-reacting.
At a time when so much that we value
seems in danger of extinction her protest
may appear pathetic and rather foolish.

After all they are only badgers
and they are being gassed officially
on the recommendation of a government scientist.
It appears that one out of six may be
tubercular and therefore dangerous to cattle.

Yet there could easily have been badgers
on that hill for many centuries.
Unless attacked by their only enemy,
from generation to generation badgers
have no need to wander far from the birthplace.

Coming from the village in the valley
the young woman has probably known
of the badgers' presence since early childhood.
That hillside may once have been
entwined in fantasy, a place of wonder.

Perhaps she is lamenting not only the shy
stay-at-home creatures lying dead
in their burrows, but those areas of innocence,
the patches of wilderness, that gradually grow
more scarce as pressures multiply.

Alan Brownjohn

Watermark

The lovely Anita, in earrings already
At twelve, in the nineteen-forties, looks out today
Through a Speak-here perspex veil in a Barclay's Bank.
With her awesome self-possession, she was equal
To any approach; and strolled the (respectable) streets
Surrounded by gallants who furnished heavy aid
Against strangers who dared a look at one precious gilt lobe.

Our middle age should have altered a lot of things
— The shy boy level now with the beautiful doll,
One broke and the other bored. But where life's ledger
Builds columns of meticulous disenchantment,
Anita still sits tight at the clasp, making sure
That its cheques and balances add up to a dead stop
On all extravagant longings; a tarnished bell
Bringing gallant support against those who might grasp the gold.

Derek Power

The rehearsal

The grand staircase of the Stockholm National Museum
Is carpeted in madonna blue.
Here the students sit and listen to the summer concerts.
That afternoon it was only the rehearsal,
Hans Leygraf playing Mozart at the grand piano.
Arm in arm we pressed our feet so very slowly on each tread
As if reluctant to reach the top
As the notes drifted down from the balcony.
Above was a huge fresco of garlands, flags, impossible cavaliers,
Their horses too clean in that field of mud.
We wandered from gallery to gallery,
From sonata to sonata,
From the gentle yellows and urgent reds of El Greco
To the gush of Boucher.
Then in the main gallery with its dome of alternating glass and stone
You bent low and through the open neck of your dress
I glimpsed your breasts suffused with sunlight.
That evening we made love in the high bed of our high hotel,
And yet that sight of your breasts
Sudden and unpremeditated,
Was to me more beautiful.

Stephen Romer

Evil counsel

Hunched in a coat in a corner
I can see the street in a mirror

and the street itself as my enemy
comes smilingly towards me

from two directions. I could gulp my beer
and vanish, if it were an answer,

if hell were merely other people
who are, with practice, avoidable.

But hell is what we can't control,
the evil counsel

he whispered in her ear
when I was nowhere

not even in the mirror.
Now she's stepping blithely through a door

and what I need, though I sit in terror,
is the neutral man who can measure

just how close this is to love
by watching its object move

away from me in two directions.

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Paul May

Animal magnet

The wet nurses, blousey in the wind,
Fell in line on the cliff path.

In the days when I was eclipsed,
Septimus took a dark bite out of me.
He sweated in a cloth nailed to a wall,
He squawled in his imitation of cats,
And his drool was molten silver spoons.

Dank and shifty, I went to pay my slow respects
To the sea, lying amber like a dish of piss.
Flies swimming in a blocked drain.
I threw branches from the edge
But could not make
The water pull itself back.
The lodestone was elsewhere in its influential circles.

Mother sniggering into someone's beer,
Then mopping up the splashes with soda bread,
While the boy slept easy,
Inheriting the earth from under my feet.

She had trained me for my business
By rubbing my face in it
When I did it.

I learned all the right responses,
But Septimus never got so far,
Like his brothers and sisters,
All piled up in the hillside.
She made cheese again that winter
And sold it from a basket by the road.

There was more tin as a result.
I remember the Northern Lights,
Pastel sheets warping on the air,
Mother stirring over a low heat.

Alison Stone

Dreams

The days crawl on,
The flowers die, poor children
Feel the thrusting sword of hunger.
The politicians talk and plan.

We sit in Anne's kitchen, believing
If we sing 'No Future' loud enough
It won't come true
And that we can change the world
By dyeing our hair.

William Scammell

Got ratted, played Dylan

He smiteth the beat, that drummer on *Desire*.

Oh yes I know Sara. We all know Sara.
Her love is a dance of severed heads.
One more cup of coffee. One more prayer.
Who else will part the wanker from his worry beads?

A mouth organ
raised to higher powers
of itself is, nuncle,
an electric violin.

I know that sister through my brother, yes
it suits us in our dog days to atone
for senses steeple in a field of grass
that can't be bothered with the telephone.

A *gui*tar, nuncle,
knows how to lose
gracefully. Okay howl
then blow your nose.

Listen, here be the voice. It's Brooklyn Bridge,
the Chrysler of the Andes; muezzin-height
love simmers in the dustbowl of its throat
calling the faithless to lie down and beg.

Words set to music, nuncle, are a song.
Songs tell us how to live with being sad.
'A luxury of derision generating self-regard'
comes close. Not close enough though.

Frank Ormsby

The diary

I buried it in the cemetery at Chungkai
(two rolls of jotter in a Thermos flask
filched from the Raffles College at Singapore)
and dug it up in 1945
on a day-trip from Bangkok.

So much I had forgotten, sights and sounds
of a year in the jungle:
lime trees and red chillis growing wild
at the edge of the compounds, cicadas, jungle frogs,
the cool poignance of the evening bell
from the Italian mission.

So much remembered: Tamils and Javanese
buried by the hundred, barges piled with dead
nudging downstream from Ninety-kilometre Camp,
the endless epidemics, the brutish guard
snarling 'Speedo! Speedo!'

And regular as on a timetable, page by page,
the names of the first stations:
the cemetery at Tarsoe,
the cemetery at Ban Pong,
the cemetery at Chungkai.

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Ever after

Ninian Smart

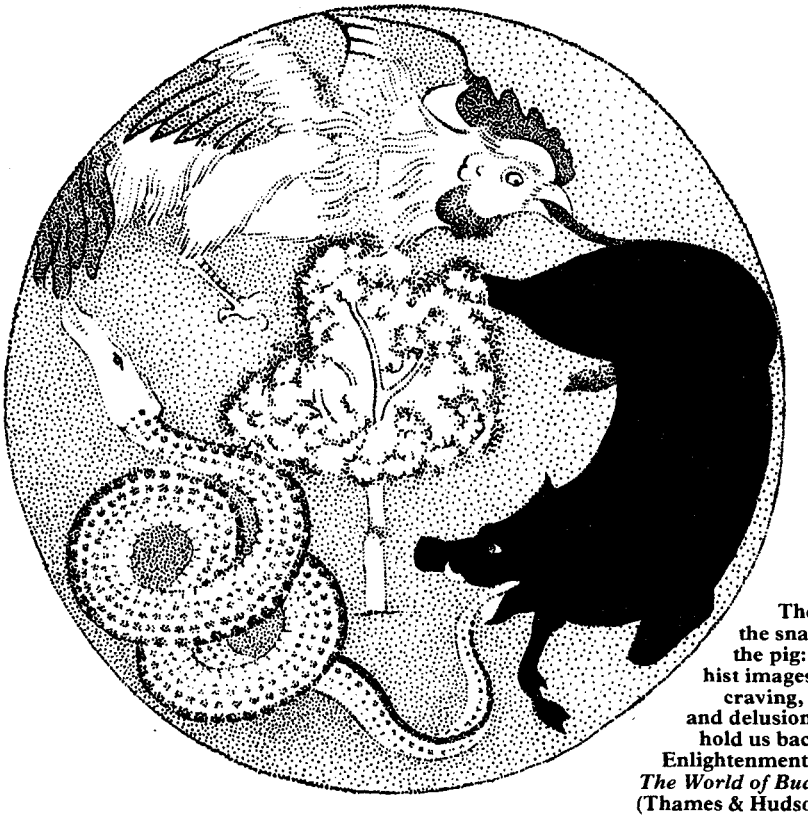
Eternal Life?
HANS KUNG *Collins* £9.95

ONE WAY to see transcendence is as a place from which to criticise this world. The Christian, allied to God, and the Buddhist, reflecting an empty ultimate, have a point-of-view beyond this-worldly utilitarianism and Marxism and other materialisms. In the light of eternity many of our personal and social goals seem trivial or tawdry: and in the light of heavenly love or the Bodhisattva's compassion, the cruelties of this world's great causes seem the more poignant. This, then, is one way to interpret the practical importance of belief in eternal life. Transcendence becomes not so much an excuse for dogmatism, as an opportunity for criticism and for alternative vision. This position, for which I have argued, is more or less what Hans Küng supports, but his book suggests much else besides.

Küng is, of course, well known as a maverick theologian at Tübingen who has taken a stand against some venerable props, including papal infallibility, of the Catholic establishment. Many Protestants find his writings congenial, for his positions are in principle those explored and articulated much earlier by Protestant liberal theology. He is not only much more influenced by the Enlightenment than most Catholic thinkers of an earlier generation, but he is versed in Anglo-Saxon religious thought. He is thus an ecumenical figure, except that his own Church disowns him as an official theologian. But many Roman Catholics think the way he does, so he is symptom of a new era. He is a notable sign of the fact that authority is elective, even among Catholics. Who fears excommunication? And has not Vatican criticism of Hans Küng increased his fame and so made him the more influential? Especially has he gained a wide readership because he is on the whole a clear and popular writer.

His main discussion begins with a current tantalising topic: so-called out-of-the-body and other experiences of those supposedly clinically dead, who then return from the brink. But they prove nothing, except that the notion of clinical death if applied to such cases ought to be revised. At most — as Küng observes — they are cases of dying rather than death. Do they suggest that we go forward into light through the tunnel of death to be confronted with the ultimate? In the end, Küng does not seriously argue for eternal life in terms of individual survival, though he affirms it on the basis of Christian faith. He does argue negatively, however, against fashionable projection theories as at best not proven. The third theme of his opening section is the varied theories of survival displayed in the great religions. It is a rather superficial discussion: German theology does not typically prepare even intelligent people well for crosscultural religious understanding.

The second section of the book deals with Christian hope — with resurrection in general, Jesus's resurrection and heaven and hell. He appears to be saying something as follows: There is eternal life, in that after death we experience God more fully than we experience him in the here and now. But such experiences are not discontinuous, and the Christian affirms the resurrection of the body in order to show that he or she is concerned with worldly, bodily existence, as transformed by experience of the eternal. Heaven is God, and hell is really a kind of purgation, not eternal damnation, in which in the light of God we experience judgment. As for Jesus's resurrection, Küng states that it is a real event, not an historical one. What he means is that the disciples experienced Jesus as a living person after his death. To be plain, they had, from within their commitment, visions. So with other religious experiences: they are ways in which the Eternal, which is not in space and time, and not beyond space and time save metaphorically, becomes manifest to people. He does not discuss how we might justify Christian visions over against Gnostic, Jewish and Buddhist ones.



The cock, the snake and the pig: Buddhist images of the craving, hatred and delusion which hold us back from Enlightenment. From *The World of Buddhism* (Thames & Hudson, £20)

In the third part, he considers the consequences. He goes back to medical themes and looks towards a medical and social ethic which will emphasise humaneness and the dignity of dying. He goes on to criticise notions of realising heaven on earth: the Christian has to see everything in the light of God 'beyond', but nevertheless, because history is central to human existence, there is a strong forward emphasis in Christian teaching — history will be consummated in a manner which will make the meaning of our lives transparent. We can strive for a better world, given that we take a critical stand.

These are some of the themes of these lectures, now a book. What are we to make of his interpretation of eternal life? He makes it very much a matter of commitment. But he also attempts to rationalise it, not always with as much clarity as could be desired. He sees the transcendent (and the eternal) as not in space and time, but not 'outside' the cosmos. He needs an analysis of non-spatiality as applied to the transcendent. He affirms that the Bible uses language quite other than that of science: science and religion can exist in parallel. He needs here to formulate the consequences of this division between scientific analysis of the cosmos and faith-statements. He gives biblical support to his positions; but he needs to say more why we should choose the Bible.

But with his social criticism and general position I agree. I think the values of international Christianity (and the values of alternative spiritual traditions) if reduced to basics provide a critique of contemporary fashions. They suggest a deeper notion of happiness than typical utilitarianism espouses; a more positive evaluation of dying than the hygienic West often permits; a reaffirmation of individualism with depth; a call towards loving enemies and caring for the poor, which are tests of political policy; a correct disillusion with national sovereignty, and a vision of humanity as the community of ultimate concern; a suspicion of human authority; and hope in dark times for bettering the world. As for immortality: it boils down to this, that the divine light is encountered after death. If you do not like it, it is hell. No doubt however a loving Creator will conceal herself (or himself) from those who would find divinity hard to take! Küng's lively essay on the meaning of eternal life is worth reading as an example of how a modern liberal Christian deals with survival. Rightly, he turns his back both on spooky spiritualism and old dogmatics. But do the older images of the Sistine Chapel and the Apocalypse of St John the Divine or the

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Tibetan Book of the Dead still retain power in this more metaphysical, critical presentation of faith? Maybe religion needs new images. □

CHILDREN

Timely tales

Michael Rosen

IS ONE of your or your offspring's favourite children's writers among these? Leon Garfield, Gene Kemp, Catherine Storr, Roald Dahl, Geoffrey Trease, Helen Cresswell, Betsy Byars, Dick King-Smith, Anthony Browne, William Mayne, Adrian Mitchell, Bob Leeson, Nicholas Fisk and James Riordan. They have all got books out for this Christmas, and by way of revival you can have John Masefield's *Box of Delights* (same time as the TV series), Dylan Thomas's *A Visit to Grandpa's*, an edition of Aesop's fables with the original illustrations printed by Caxton and an edition of all Harry Graham's *Ruthless Rhymes*. It is impossible to do all these first-rate authors justice with one-liners so let me simply say that if you've got an interest in any of these writers, then do hunt out their latest book.

I'll start with the rogue elephant of the children's book world — Roald Dahl. You will have been perhaps both fascinated and appalled by the Dahl phenomenon. Amazing fantasy, revolting details, brilliant twists of plot are the hall-marks. You may also have been appalled at the outbursts of mysogyny (*Witches*), the colonialist, if not racist, feel of the original version of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and the xenophobic asides of *The B.F.G.* Now you have an opportunity to look at Dahl himself as he has written an autobiography of his childhood and youth. The book is superbly written. He is one of the few authors for children who can *talk* to a reader. Here he is talking about one of the central themes of the book: 'By now you will be wondering why I lay so much emphasis upon school beatings in these pages. The answer is I cannot help it.' And indeed, the book is a great anti-caning propaganda piece with public school chaps of all sizes doing their stuff — one of whom was to become the Archbish. of C. himself. If you have someone at home who has grown out of *The Twits* but wants more Dahl this is a glimpse of a brilliant eccentric. **Boy** by Roald Dahl (Cape, £6.50).

For younger humans, you *must* have a look at William Mayne's 'Hob' books (Walker Books, £3.95 each). William Mayne has written four books of bizarre stories about a kind of house spirit. This spirit is a kind of Roy Kinnear figure in long johns who is the fantasy friend of two children. The style of the writing is extraordinary. Mayne has invented a kind of Hobspeak to describe events. In each story Hob deals with imaginary gremlins like Eggy Palmer who makes your custard lumpy. These books are highly original, very satisfying and eerie in just the right way.

Another must for your list is Adrian Mitchell's **Nothingmas Day** (Allison & Busby, illustrated by John Lawrence, £5.95). First, the feel of the book: it is peppered with woodcuts that are rather like old nursery rhyme books. You can find all kinds of poems here: songs, jingles, thoughts, jokes — and many moods: angry, hysterical, serene, silly, philosophical, mocking and so on.

'The Battle Hymn of the Ice Cream Connoisseur' begins: 'Mine eyes have seen the glory of Pink Fudge Sundaes.' 'Not a Very Cheerful Song I'm Afraid' begins:

> There was a gloomy lady
> With a gloomy duck and a gloomy drake,
> And they all three wandered gloomily
> Beside a gloomy lake
> On a gloomy, gloomy, gloomy, gloomy, gloomy day.

The book will give you several favourites. I like 'Dumb Insolence'.

> I stick my hands in my pockets
> And stare at them.
>
> And while I stare at them
> I think about sick...

You may have a Betsy Byars fan at home. *The Eighteenth Emergency* is one of her great successes. She has now written **The Computer Nut** (Bodley Head, £4.95). I have heard of parents who grew up with books and now find themselves in bitter despair because they have an 11-year-old stuck to a computer terminal night after night. This book might put such people back on speaking terms. It is set right in the heart of US High School life where a computer-crazy girl starts receiving messages on a computer. It is BB-9 who is a 'peacable being without malice of intent whose interest is in mutual exchange of information'. BB-9 thinks that earth is 'The Laughing Planet' (because people laugh here). BB-9 has found out what makes us laugh — jokes. On the way to discovering all this we get a lot of young teen biz. The americanisms come thick and fast — 'kiddie shrink'/'snickers'/'schnauzers' and so on. So BB-9 has programmed himself to tell jokes. The trouble is, all his jokes are terrible and no one on earth laughs. This makes the book kind of sad-funny. Peel that 11-year-old off the screen and stick this in front of its eyes.

NS readers desperate to find folk and fairy stories with female lead parts, un-wicked witches and powerful girls may know of such books as *Clever Gretchen* (Alison Lurie). James Riordan has produced **The Woman in the Moon and other tales of forgotten heroines** illustrated by Angela Barrett (Hutchinson, £5.95). Here are 14 stories, e.g. 'The Nagging Husband', 'The Aztec Sun-Goddess'. Angela Barrett's illustrations are black and white engraving-like drawings. In his preface, James Riordan asks some crunchy questions: Why are witches evil and ugly, yet sorcerers good? Why do fairy tales have wicked stepmothers but hardly ever wicked stepfathers? Why are there ugly sisters but no ugly brothers? He goes on to talk about the importance of 'tales' in our learning and how both boys and girls need these stories of forgotten heroines so that they 'might encourage the imagination and creativity of all children at the expense of none.' The stories belong to many different peoples: Italian, Vietnamese, Ghanaian, Irish, English, Estonian and so on. They are superbly told, a necessary and vital part of our world property of narratives and, yes, don't we need them in the hubbub of the *A-Team, He-Man, Knight Rider, Auto-man, The Dukes of Hazzard* and other folk-heroes of our time? □

Red hope

Fred Halliday

Marxism, Wars and Revolutions
ISAAC DEUTSCHER *Verso* £18.50 & £6.95
The Great Purges
ISAAC DEUTSCHER designed by DAVID KING
Basil Blackwell £12.50

WHEN Isaac Deutscher died in 1967, the Left lost its greatest and most perceptive mind since the revolutionaries who had dominated, in action and writing, the first two decades of this century. Deutscher, a Polish Marxist who lived in Britain from the late 1930s, devoted his life to two extended intellectual tasks: one was the history and analysis of the Bolshevik revolution, something he approached through its biographies of Stalin and Trotsky, and in which he combined unwavering support for the goals of the revolution and an unrelenting historical materialist critique of its outcome; the other was the systematic analysis, over four decades, of the events of international politics, and in particular the twists and turns of the international Communist movement, in power and opposition.

Deutscher's achievement lay not so much in one or other of these activities, but in the enriching combination of the two: how, calmly and with unrivalled historical perspective, he could explain the deformation of the revolutions made in the name of Marx and Engels by reference to historical materialism itself, and how this same perspective and political position could elucidate the turmoils of the world during and after the 1939-45 war.

These two books illustrate different aspects of Deutscher's work. **The Great Purges** is based on talks Deutscher gave on the Moscow trials of 1936-8 and the political circumstances surrounding them. It is characteristic of his courage and honesty that he should have devoted his energies to examining this event above all, the most morally disturbing and most rationally inexplicable of all the tragic vagaries of Communism in this century. Richly illustrated with photographs of Russia in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as of Stalin, his associates and victims, and of the photographic revisions required of group portraits after the purges, this is a lurid and compelling account of the trials.

The Great Purges also documents something that is too easily forgotten now: that despite Stalin's lies, and the indulgence of much of the western Left about them (the *New Statesman* included) the Moscow trials were publicly and clearly denounced at the time by Trotsky and by others, such as Victor Serge. The old enthusiasts of Moscow loyalism would have us believe they had no way of knowing. The new enthusiasts, exhibiting a rather callow historical

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sensibility, would have us imagine the trials never happened at all, while the strident chorus of the Gulagists and Orwellites would make out that it was they who first uncovered the truth about Stalinism years later.

Marxism, Wars and Revolution, a new selection of Deutscher's essays from the denunciation of the Moscow trials in 1936 itself to his speeches on the Vietnam War and the Cultural Revolution of the mid-1960s, is an excellent compilation of his work, including material never before published. Prefaced by essays from Perry Anderson and Tamara Deutscher, it evokes both the great political vibrancy of Deutscher's writing and the wide range of interests that were united in the culture of his generation.

Three features of his writing stand out from these essays with particular strength. First, there is his historical sense: the careful comparisons of the Russian and French revolutions, the account of Polish Communism's grim history, the demonstration of how the long struggles of the Chinese Communists so shaped their revolution and the regime they created.

Secondly, there is his cosmopolitanism. Raised in Poland, he shared that broad culture and political curiosity of the pre-war Central European intelligentsia. After settling in England, he learned to write in the language of his adopted country with elegance and precision. In his politics, he brought together a comprehensive interest in the affairs of those in struggle throughout the world with a sharp distrust for nationalist cant in all its forms. The current fashions of some of the Left — servile accommodation to nationalism of all stripes on the one hand, insular and picayune self-obsession on the other — would have been quite alien to him. His essays on China in this volume are a fine example of this cosmopolitan at work.

Thirdly, there is his optimism. He came from a generation that bore the heaviest of blows to their socialist conviction and revolutionary optimism — the defeat of the European revolutions in the 1920s, the Stalinist purges in the 1930s, the World War and Nazi genocide in the 1940s, and the Cold War and capitalist recomposition that followed. Yet, in the face of all this, and without facile dogmatism and brash evasions, he stood firm, insisting on the unacceptability of capitalism and the possibility and desirability of a socialist alternative.

Deutscher did not argue that human beings were perfectible, nor that socialism could solve all the problems we face as humans, but he did see socialism as a necessary precondition for a greater and yet attainable emancipation of people throughout the world, and he retained the view that the socialist revolutions that had taken place could, for all their deformations, lead in the future to more democratic and humane societies. As is evident from his essay on 'The Roots of Bureaucracy', the key to his perspective on these revolutions was not an unseeing naivety, but a historical materialist explanation of why and how the Stalinist regime in Russia and its clones and associates had taken the form they did.

The fate of the Left, and of the international Communist movement in particular, since Deutscher's death have only underlined the importance of his work. When the Soviet leadership is on the verge of rehabilitating Stalin and has given Molotov back his party card and party privileges, when western Europe's leading Communist party, the PCI, is supporting NATO, and when the Chinese, those most nationalist and autarkic of revolutionaries, are opening their doors to foreign capital with gusto, his analyses of the formation and materialist conditioning of revolutionary movements become even more pertinent. The history that he analysed, and which he applied to his writings on current events, is one that has shaped us all and which, if we try to ignore it, imprisons us all the more.

My personal favourite among the essays in *Marxism, Wars and Revolution* is his critique of Orwell's *1984*. After a year in which we have been subjected to a deluge of cant and piety about this mediocre misanthrope, it is refreshing indeed to read Deutscher's critique of *1984* — its underlying sadism, its nauseous and banal pessimism, and its unacknowledged derivation from a much better book by a Russian author. There is no better way to see out the old year than to read it. □

Wide canvas

Aidan Foster-Carter

The Three Worlds: Culture and World Development
PETER WORSLEY *Weidenfeld* £16.95 & £8.95

THIS IS A splendid sprawl of a book. 'I wish to publish this life-work before it becomes the death of me', the author admits. In one sense, it is the long awaited follow-up to his *The Third World*, which in 1964 was one of the very first books in English on its topic and introduced a whole generation to the intellectual excitement and practical urgency of the problems of underdeveloped countries.

Now, as then, Worsley writes with a panache sadly rare among academic sociologists. To get your attention he grabs you by the balls, literally: the very first paragraph has the young author at Port Said in 1944, looking in horror at a man with a 'football' between his legs — which turned out to be his scrotum, swollen with elephantiasis.

Yet overall this is no *Mondo Cane* account of the Third World. Although full of arresting illustration, the book always links this to the pursuit of analytical themes, of which two are primary. One, substantive, is to examine all three 'worlds' — ie not just the Third World in isolation — in an historical context. The other, conceptual, seeks to blend economic with cultural analysis; or, perhaps, to effect a marriage between the author's own two major influences, Marxism and social anthropology.

It would be surprising if such an ambitious project were wholly successful. I fear that many a general reader may come unstuck early on, in the course of the 60 pages of 'Prolegomena' which lurch dizzyingly from Latin American history to theories of development to debates within Marxism (often exceedingly arcane) on modes of production; and then onwards to culture, the need for holism in anthropology, literary criticism, and the study of deviancy and sub-cultures. There *is* an argument (indeed several) in all this; but the novice may fail to discern the guiding thread, while those already familiar with the debates might feel that issues have been hurried over or fudged.

The bulk of the book, however, consists of substantial chapters on three major areas: in effect, the rural and urban Third Worlds, and the vexed question of ethnicity and nationalism. These are Worsley at his best. In particular chapter two, 'The Undoing of the Peasantry', at 100-plus pages, could stand on its own as an introductory survey of just about every issue that has ever mattered in the analysis of rural change anywhere; from hunters and gatherers to agribusiness, and from China to Ecuador.

Chapter three, 'The Making of the Working Class', is nearly as long and just as good on urban issues: the so-called 'informal sector', 'lumpen-proletariat' or 'marginalized' populations. As it happens, Worsley has little time for any of these terms. One of the things at which he excels is demonstrating what's in a name: it *does* matter what you call such populations, because each designation has different implications for analysis and policy, and some may be seriously misleading.

Another virtue is that the author practises what he preaches. His workers and peasants, far from the robotically conceived economic role-fillers of much recent structuralist sociology, are real flesh-and-blood individuals and groups: they have cultural as well as economic goals (they may not necessarily even distinguish them); and they think and act for themselves, rather than just reacting passively to forces outside their ken and control.

The chapter on 'Ethnicity and Nationalism' also highlights this key cultural dimension, too often neglected in a misconceived effort to reduce everything to class. It also contains a brief and even dismissive reference to what had been a major theme of the earlier book: populism. It is difficult, in the world of the mid-1980s, to sustain the optimism of the mid-1960s that the Third World might indeed find or offer a 'third way'.

The final chapter, 'One world or three', tries to draw some threads together — or perhaps rather to unravel them, since it has some of the looseness and range of the first. It isn't clear how the author would answer his own question. What does come across is Peter Worsley's continuing impassioned commitment to a humanist socialism, and his (at the very least) grudging respect for a Communism whose accomplishments may not look so wholly negative when seen from the Third World as they do in the First.

As with any big, bold canvas, some may find the detail uneven, the perspective idiosyncratic or even (perhaps) the colours too gaudy. But for anyone new to Third World studies who wants to know what the issues are, you could do a lot worse than start here. And even those already *au fait* with the debates should be refreshed, as well as provoked, by Peter Worsley's characteristic exuberance. Not just a big book, this is a big-hearted book; and both socialism and sociology — distinct enterprises, to be sure, *pace* Sir Keith — are about hearts as well as heads. □

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FICTION

War cry

Sheila MacLeod

Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays
CHRISTA WOLF *Virago* £10.95 & £4.50
Virgin Territory
SARA MAITLAND *Michael Joseph* £8.95
Rituals
CEES NOOTEBOOM *Viking* £8.95
Marge
KITTY FITZGERALD *Sheba* £3.75

TRY REWRITING the *Iliad* from a woman's point of view. It is not a task to be lightly undertaken and yet Christa Wolf, the distinguished East German writer (now based in West Germany), has managed to create in a mere 138 pages something approaching a feminine epic. **Cassandra**, seer and prophetess, stands not only for the woman writer who perceives intuitively and unheard in the male world, but also for all women struggling towards that elusive synthesis of autonomy and responsibility: women who cannot make things happen, but to whom everything happens; women who invoke the power of the mothers, only to be silenced or stigmatised as mad by the fathers; women who bear children, only to see them raped or slaughtered in man-made wars.

Christa Wolf sees the Trojan War — and, by extension, all war — as the systematic murder of the female principle, the very principle which seeks to prevent war in the first place. Her Trojan women have much in common with their latter-day sisters at Greenham and Cassandra herself with the Doris Lessing of *The Golden Notebook* or *The Summer Before the Dark*, daring to claim a position of central importance for female experience. Of course she suffers for it. But then she would have suffered anyway — unless she had been born and bred in the 'alternative' female culture which flourishes in secret, isolated groups outside the walls of the citadel of Troy.

In a sense this is all familiar territory and the stuff of many a feminist text. But there is more here. To judge only by the translation Christa Wolf handles language with all the precision and sensitivity of a poet: a lyric-intellectual poet intent on soaring with no middle flight. The background essays (and for those whose recollection of the Trojan Wars is a trifle hazy, it would be as well to read these first) are fittingly less concentrated, more speculative, while never departing from the mode of high seriousness. They will also have an unfamiliarly urgent edge for British readers, emanating as they do from a divided Germany which sees itself as the prime target of nuclear annihilation.

The setting of Sara Maitland's **Virgin Territory** is presumably contemporary but, compared to the timeless *Cassandra*, this novel has a curiously dated feel to it. A nun at a South American convent is raped, thus precipitating a mini-nervous breakdown in one of her sisters who then returns to England for a recuperative sabbatical. In London the secular world begins to impinge upon Sister Anna, mainly through a brain-damaged child and its parents and a group of gay feminists. Each group urges her in its own way towards the delights of the flesh and Anna is sorely tempted, but eventually leaves England with her cherished virginity of body and soul tried but intact.

The brain-damaged Caro delivers long monologues to Anna on her experience of birth, her anger at being born female and damaged, and the nature of the male and female principles throughout the course of human history. Whether such unusual articulacy constitutes an hallucination on Anna's part or is merely a literary device is never clear. In either event it is unnecessary because it is already obvious that Caro represents the suppressed child in Anna, the suppressed anger and spontaneity of the motherless little girl who still craves a mother — or a woman lover.

What works much better is Anna's relationship with Karen, her would-be lover, a strong vibrant woman who bounces off the page to the same extent that Anna merges pälely into it. The scenes between the two women (and indeed the group) show that Sara Maitland can write extraordinarily well when she gets off her soap-box. But I will not be the only reader, frustrated by Anna's persistent denial of her fleshly needs, to mutter 'Why on earth can't they just go to bed together? After all, no one's going to get pregnant.' Not a novel for heterosexual atheists.

In **Rituals** discipline becomes a religion rather than religion a discipline. This novel, which won two prizes in its native Netherlands, is the story of Inni Wintrop, a failed suicide who wanders through Amsterdam (and through life) inviting chance encounters, sexual or otherwise, and somehow managing to survive the consequent vicissitudes. But Inni's story is less important than those of Arnold and Philip Taads, a father and son who don't know each other (the father having walked out when the son was a baby) and don't want to. By any standards these are egregious — and brilliantly portrayed — examples of (male?) rigidity.

Arnold, the father, is a fierce atheist and Sartrean who allows no quarter to disorderly conduct or thinking. Incapable of any emotion other than anger, his one concession to what passes for human affection lies in his relationship with his dog. He has his own belief-system, his own unfailing routine. As does Philip, an adherent of the somewhat chillier Japanese Philosophy of Tea, a 'moral geometry' which illuminates the futility of existence. The hideous, bottomless loneliness of both Arnold and Philip is almost incredible and at the same time all too convincing. Unlike Inni, to whom they both preach at some length, both men become successful suicides. This is an enigmatic and somewhat merciless parable which never fails to compel.

As a thriller **Marge** is too predictable to be totally compelling. The strength of Kitty Fitzgerald's first novel lies rather in its minute depiction of everyday relationships, domestic or professional, and the inevitable consequences of their inadequacies. It should prove salutory reading for the 'caring' professions as well as for the self-styled 'mother-damaged' male. □

Fast talk

Robert del Quiaro

Listen, Companero
CENSA £3.95
Voices from El Salvador
MARIO MENENDEZ RODRIGUEZ £4.50
Solidarity Publications (available from Third World Publications, 151 Stratford Rd, Birmingham 11) plus 50p postage each

IF CENTRAL AMERICA is ever to live in peace and justice, not only must society in the region be transformed but a radical change in the attitude of the US to what many of its people regard as its backyard may also be required.

Here are two more of the many publications which, since the Sandinista resurgence in Nicaragua in the late Seventies, have tried to win hearts and minds in the north. The established formula is followed — go down there with your tape-recorder, interview sundry progressive protagonists, transcribe the tapes into a quick paperback, think of a stirring title.

But, just as show business relies on the maxim that no one ever went broke under-estimating the taste of the American public, so publishers in this field should never under-estimate the ignorance of Americans (Brits, too).

Of these two, one (*Listen, Companero*) does a fair job of showing John and Jane Sophomore how the present mayhem in Central America arose and what certain pivotal people are doing about it. The other piles ill-applied political scientific abstractions ('absolutization' yet) in the path to any clear understanding by the reader of how in El Salvador people on the rack are trying to end tyranny. *Voices* is littered with unexplained references to events, thrice commits titillation and cliché with photographs of pretty *guerrilleras* holding rifles, and allows the author chunks of self-glorification that no reporter the informative side of Max Hastings should allow into print without curling up into a ball of shame.

Those responsible for *Listen*, by contrast, mostly acted on an understanding that the speech of Marxism-steeped Latin American revolutionaries often needs more than translation for us *gringos*. Both books carry interviews with the veteran *guerrillero* Marcial, though you would hardly think the reflective, accessible ex-baker of *Listen* was also the jargon-muzzled figure traduced in *Voices*. Benedicto of Guatemala is good on the value of the frugal, hard-working and communitarian indigenous peoples. Jaime Wheelock, a senior member of the Nicaraguan government, talks about change through administration and, though already sounding a bit of a politburocrat, he is unequivocal on the iniquity of US counter-attack and on Cuban aid for Nicaragua.

So one of these books is worth a listen, *companeros y companeras* everywhere, but practitioners in this genre must explain fully and clearly — both these lack maps, for instance — to move us readers in high-comfort societies. □

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EXHIBITIONS

Delightfully adorned

Jules Lubbock

'AGAINST the feast of Christmas every man's house, as also the parish churches, were decked with holm, ivy, bays and whatsoever the season of the year afforded to be green. The conduits and standards in the streets were likewise garnished.'

Thus the London of Merry England described by John Stow in his *Survey* of 1598. Look at it now, at Regent's Street with its tawdry Mickey Mouse garlands. Time was when Selfridges placed a huge decorated tree between each of the giant columns of its facade, and a wonderful sleigh over the entrance. At other times, on Trafalgar Day for instance, Nelson's Column was garlanded from top to toe. That's what such edifices were designed for — as the backdrop to festivities, their carved ornaments a memento of the living pageantry with which they were periodically bedecked. But today's stores are mean and the state parsimonious.

In our homes, however, the old tradition flourishes in the decorated tree, that natural steeple, placed in the front window for the pleasure of passers-by. For me, old pagan that I am, its adornment is the year's chief ritual, when, with my own children, I relive my own childhood, as we carefully balance the mirror-glass globes on the branches and festoon them, strand by strand, with hundreds of silvery wisps which gently rotate in the currents of air and glitter when the lights are turned on. I know of no better remedy for saturnalian low-spirits in this dread, dead time of year than to sit back and gaze endlessly at the play of light in the evergreen.

These reflections are prompted by the Scrooge-like spirit of the day and by my difficulty this year in finding seasonal exhibitions to recommend. The Boilerhouse, so light-hearted in the past, has an exhibition of Formica. I have had to search further afield.

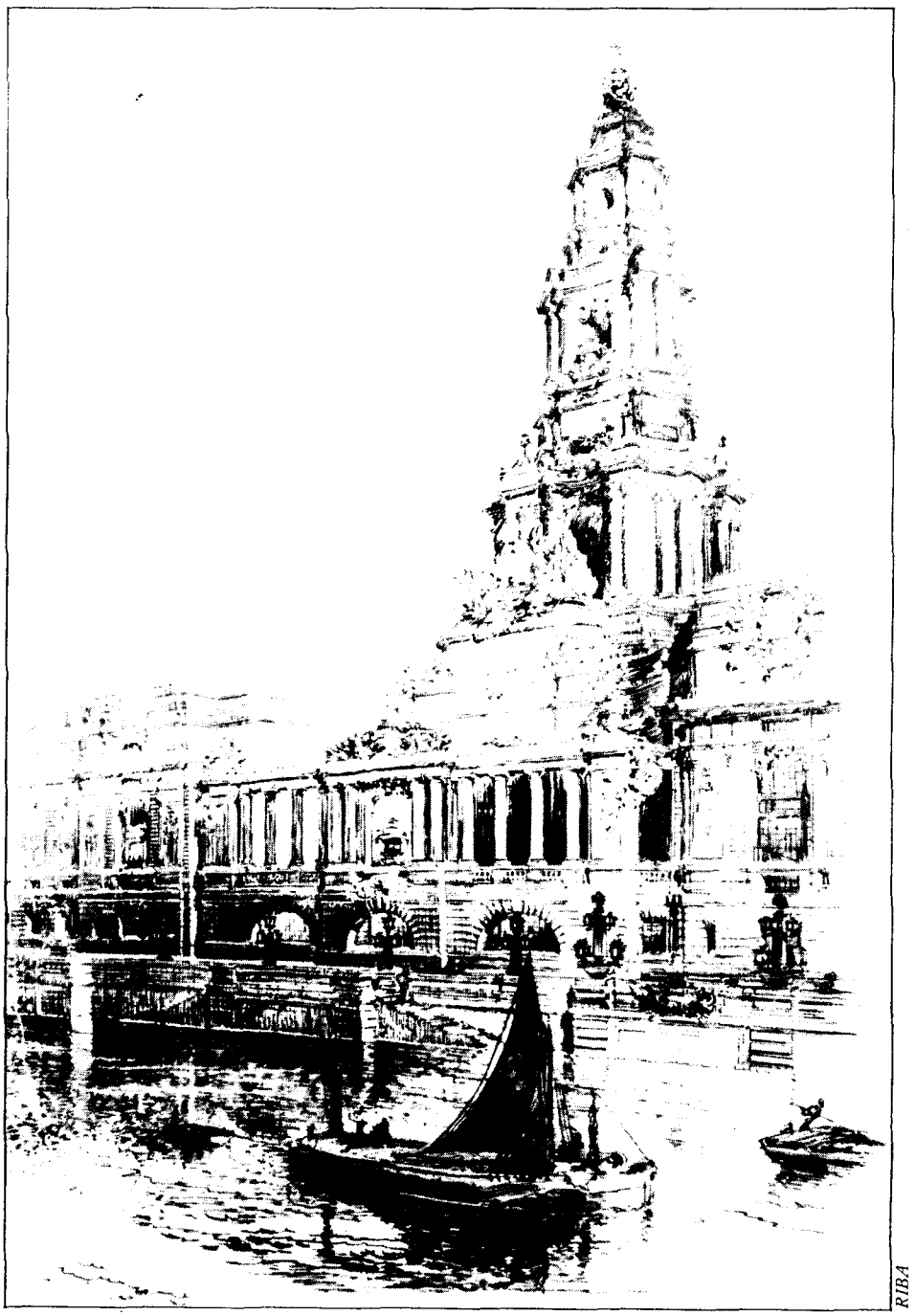
The Labour History Museum in old Limehouse Town Hall, Commercial Rd, E14 (closed from 22 Dec. — 3 Jan.) is resplendent once again with its newly restored collection of Trades Union banners. My favourite is that of the Operative Bricklayers Society of around 1900. It shows a triumphal arch that is itself a triumph of polychromatic brickwork, in whose upper arches we see aspects of the craft: gauge-work, or the cutting of bricks to make fine gothic arches, and in the centre the laying of the keystone of one such window-arch. Happily, this great skill, which survives as part of the bricklayer's training, is increasingly in demand.

Here too are all the memorabilia of the Labour Movement, including decorated campaign mugs, the most recent of which is on sale in aid of the miners. Walter Crane's membership card for the Social Democratic Party of 1908 shows a fruiting tree flanked by allegorical figures of Production and Distribution. Compare this with today's utilitarian Labour Party cards. Surely Labour needs artistry to celebrate the arts and crafts it exists to protect? The movement also needs to support its own museum, so contributions to Neil Kinnock at the above address.

My other exhibition, 'The Art of the Architect', is held in the 'toff's' own headquarters, the RIBA, 66 Portland Place, until 27 Jan. (also closed from 22 Dec. — 1 Jan.) and shows for the first time the finest architectural drawings from their own collection — one of the best in the world. Here, conversely, there is not even an ironical reflection on the workmen who made it possible for the architects' designs to be realised — the division of labour reigns supreme.

The exhibition reminds us of how, for all their faults (and of these we are reminded by a letter of John Ruskin refusing the Royal Gold Medal because of the architects' 'infamous neglect of most previous work... of destruction in the name of restoration for the sake of emolument, of the sacrifice of any and all to temporary convenience' for which the members of the Institute were 'assuredly answerable') — of how, compared to today's practitioners, architects of the past loved their art and revered their muse. Their travel-notes testify to their intense curiosity about the past. Hawksmoor's view of Nottingham, for example, shows all the houses hugging the line of the hill, whose skyline is broken only by the Cathedral tower and the spire of St Peter's: the ascendancy of the public over the private domain.

Among the perspectives there is Waterhouse's unsuccessful entry for the Law Courts Competition of 1866 — an object lesson in designing towers, with no fewer than four major and innumerable minor ones in the gothic style, all of them different. But the gem, for me, is an opal-coloured drawing by Ruskin



RIBA

The grandeur the GLC never had: a 1907 competition design for County Hall

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himself of a late-gothic tomb in Verona, which exemplifies his ideal of the union of architecture, sculpture and ironwork. In all, half the British drawings here manifest this love of spires, steeples, domes, turrets, lanterns and high chimneys which are the glory of our architecture.

The exceptions, inevitably, are the work of the modernists, the Scrooges of our day, and of some of their Palladian predecessors — a school that looks just like graph-paper, a silly design for a window-cleaning crane by the 'Cossack of Coin St.', Richard Rogers, and an even sillier 'glass retention system' by Norman Foster.

Ornamental architecture has this in common with Christmas decorations: it is a gift by patrons, workers and designers to their fellow citizens, inspired by the festive spirit: of liberality, bounty and hospitality in obedience to the principle that our public buildings 'deserve to be decently and delightfully adorned'. □

THEATRE

Booyaahayaaee

Benedict Nightingale

Coriolanus
SHAKESPEARE *Olivier*
The Winter's Tale
SHAKESPEARE *Christ Church, Spitalfields*

EARLY IN **Coriolanus**, one of the Roman generals exotically claims that he's as good at telling the sound of the title-character's 'tongue from every meaner man' as shepherds are at distinguishing thunder from tabors. One knows what he means, because the tongue in question belongs to Ian McKellen and has just been heard transforming the simple sentence 'come I too late?' into 'caahm Ai too laiyate?' And so it goes on, insistently displaying its dissatisfaction with vowels as they are used by patricians and plebeians, not to mention the average citizen and theatregoer of 1984. At the point of death the word 'boy' becomes a weird gurgling wail of 'booyaahayaaee'. In fact, there are times when one feels that McKellen's tongue has invented a new tongue, or at least a new regional accent: a blend of melodic throb and euphonious whinny, mainly to be found on upmarket stages in and out of the metropolis. There's Welsh, there's Somerset, there's Yorkshire, there's Ulster, and now there's McKellen.

Or, of course, it's rediscovered an old tongue and accent, one more acceptable in the high days of the great actor-managers than now. That's long been the fear gnawing at my critical conscience as I've seen McKellen rise, and justifiably rise, to his present eminence in our theatre. He's undeniably a major actor, wonderfully bold when it comes to exploring and exposing heart, gland, stomach, bowels, indeed every last inch of the jungle within; and his Coriolanus is in many ways a fine, intense performance. Though macho aggression wouldn't seem his forte, he makes a perfectly plausible killing-machine, with his blood-streaked torso and his grim and baleful relish for the fray. And then there's his fastidiousness, his disdain, his arrogance — who would have thought it possible to sneer so variously and interestingly?

Up go his lips to the very sides of his nose, as if sympathising with it for the sour proletarian stink it's obliged to inhale; then out they spread in a great, knowing grin of contempt; and from somewhere inside comes an endless flow of emotional acid, sometimes brusque and sometimes world-weary, sometimes harsh and sometimes fake gentle, but mostly very biting indeed. The performance has content all right. The problem is a style often too mannered, too precious, too exorbitant to defend in the obvious way, by pointing out that Coriolanus is actually a rather mannered, precious, exorbitant character. Until McKellen gets style and content, manner and matter, consistently in sync., that present eminence of his will, I fear, never become pre-eminence.

Peter Hall's production — like the RSC's new *Winter's Tale* and many another classic revival these days — is multi-period and mega-anachronistic. That's to say, someone has been tying abstruse Einsteinian knots in Rome's space-time continuum, so that senators in togas rub shoulders with parliamentarians in pin-striped suits and Coriolanus himself saunters into a battle with a broadsword but is finally cut down by a hail of bullets. The object is presumably the somewhat superfluous one of reminding us that the Sweet Swan was also the Immortal Bard, an old bird canny enough to have something to say about Mrs Thatcher's Britain as well as James I's England and pre-Christian Italy. And some such intention must also explain the casting of a few dozen members of the audience as the Roman plebs.

I may say, Shakespeare's wild, shiftless, poverty-stricken rabble didn't seem to me ideally represented by a young lady with a Gucci handbag, a beaming professorial type in tweed, a dapper City gent and several others I could mention. Nor did their sheepish meanderings, half-hearted handclappings and forlorn bleatings for Coriolanus's banishment compare very impressively with the behaviour of some of their counterparts in the play's stage history: the 200-strong mob described by Henry Morley 150 years ago, for instance, which 'fluctuated to and fro, as their violent assent or dissent impelled them, with a loud and overwhelming suddenness and one-minded ponderosity, truly fearful to think of encountering'. Myself, I've seen more suddenness and ponderosity in the throng at a bring-and-buy sale than at the National last Saturday. Still, what theatre these days can afford even the number of walk-ons a 19th-century manager's petty cash would have bought him?

In any case, it's clearly Hall's conscious aim to present us with a Roman proletariat we can identify with, one more respectable or at least less giddy and unruly than is to be found in the play most of us know. Why else would he change the most abjectly absurd of all its remarks about the renegade Coriolanus, 'though we willingly consented to his banishment, yet it was against our will', into a relatively sane and sensible 'though we willingly consented to his banishment, yet it was his death we wished for'? The original line would, it's true, have seemed doubly ridiculous, since the speaker was an intense young man in a sweatshirt, the sort you might see lending a hand on a picket line or articulately at work in a Labour Party caucus. But the emendation is a grave distortion of Shakespeare's intentions. Like it or not, the play is scathingly and sweepingly cynical, seeing whim, pique, greed and other personal feelings in just about every political posture and public person: a proud, mother-fixated protagonist, a shifty and manipulative patrician party, sly and devious tribunes and, not least, plebeians utterly incapable of consistency.

Still, one piece of well-meant vandalism can't reduce a whole play to rubble and, whatever the reservations, we do often feel what we should: that a representative spread of special interests are calculating, manoeuvring, miscalculating, manoeuvring and, in the process, doing much to remind us painfully of our own era. Moreover, there are some excellent performances on show: Irene Worth's majestically unruffled Volumnia, so sure of her rightmindedness, so complacent in her power and emotionally mesmeric that she hardly need do more than smile to have her way; Greg Hicks's Aufidius, darkly brooding from inside his chivalric shell; David Ryall's tribune, with his rumpled suit and battered briefcase, a wryly observant picture of the trades-union apparatchik in various stages and phases, from mistrust and suspicion to dogged outrage, from triumph to incredulous, woebegone defeat.

As for Adrian Noble's production of **The Winter's Tale**, now in a vaulty East End church after several weeks on the road, well, it seems more intent on beguiling us with surface invention than on reaching into the interstices of the play itself. Not that I minded being asked to blow up balloons for the sheepshearing party, or drink the Ribena oddly on offer on its picnic-tables, or play bowls with Polixenes and Camillo, or laugh at the jokey and clever things being done with stilts, cameras, office furniture and whatnot. It was just that I felt that there were richer and more complex performances imploring to be allowed to escape all the principals, even the relatively effective Alun Armstrong, a gawky, warty Leontes capable of disconcerting you with his maniac laughter and touching you with his tearfulness. □

Among this week's contributors:

SIMON BURT's first collection of short stories is to be published by Faber next autumn.

NINIAN SMART is Professor of Religious Studies at Lancaster. His books include *Reasons and Faiths, The Religious Experience of Mankind* and *The Phenomenon of Christianity.*

MICHAEL ROSEN's latest children's book is *Nasty* (Longman). He is co-presenter of *Black and White and Read All Over* (C4).

AIDAN FOSTER-CARTER teaches sociology at the University of Leeds.

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PHOTOGRAPHY

Snapping clichés

Peter Dormer

THE AMATEUR photographer is an exceptionally ordinary animal: male, rather conservative, but profligate. Last year, for example, the photography industry was worth over £600 millions in Britain, with over £200 million spent on equipment, much of it imported.

What amateurs like to photograph are family scenes, landscapes and tastefully arranged but nonetheless naked women — silhouettes are popular. The photography magazines are full of technical advice and the articles are written in a jaunty, verbose style of NCO geniality — the style one might expect at a motor home drivers' annual dinner 'n' dance. The amateur photography magazines are *Daily Mail/Daily Express* country. But it would be foolish not to note that these journals are beginning to change. Some still use a vaguely soft-porn come-on for their covers but the male centredness of the magazines is beginning to trouble some readers. This is reflected on the letters page. Even radical photography is occasionally allowed to enter although not interfere with a narrow view of life which composes all the world into versions of the suburban picturesque.

In early autumn the weekly magazine *Amateur Photographer* carried an article about Camerawork, the radical political magazine and gallery based in East London. It also carried an 'assessment' of the photographer Helmut Newton. Helmut Newton is loathed by groups such as Camerawork for exploiting women and for the sexual violence implicit in his photographs. The article on Camerawork was a fair, albeit superficial description of that organisation's work. The Helmut Newton piece was a defensive footnote and made two contentious assertions: first, that Newton subverts his own photographs with wit; second, that he does not play to men's fantasies but presents 'a frankly intimidating definition of female sexuality'. Both points are probably rubbish but the presence of the two articles in the same issue of the magazine provides an opportunity for readers of *Amateur Photographer*, or better still their wives or models, to dispute the article. Were they to do this, it would demonstrate the effectiveness of organisations such as Camerawork's in raising and widening debate about photography.

The surprising thing about photography by amateurs is how cliché-ridden, uncreative and plain dull it is. In the manner encouraged by the photography magazines photography is just a repetitive craft and amateurs are like basket makers endlessly repeating traditional designs.

The photography magazines invite professionals to show their work. The October issue of *Camera and Creative Photography* featured the work of a successful fashion photographer — John Swannell. He shows a series of black and white pictures of naked women in a Scottish landscape. God alone knows why but *he* says, 'I was after the contrast between the wildness of Scotland and the sensual, soft, gentle female form.' This must surely be the oldest cliché in the book and such visual muzak, this sub-Lawrentian 'body and earth' fetish was beautifully parodied 40 years ago by Stella Gibbons in her *Cold Comfort Farm* in which the ghastly Mr Mybug (for whom every hill was a breast) tramped around the country saying it 'made him feel as if he were tramping on the body of a great brown woman'. What is fascinating about these figure studies in landscape is how the model is always conventionally fashionable in shape.

Of course, the amateur now has the lead of royal amateurism to follow in the person of the whirlibird Prince. *Amateur Photographer* explains all:

> Curiously pre-Raphaelite from the neck up and wet-suited from the neck down, she stepped hesitantly into the wintry pools. Prince Andrew and Katie Rabett were busy recreating part of the Arthurian legend for the 1985 Ilford calendar.

September's *35MM Photography* magazine provided further anodyne recipes in an article called 'On The Streets' where we were told, 'Steve Cooling takes a walk on the wild side through the streets of Leeds to discover a wealth of possibilities.' Go on, what did he find? A close-up of a drain and gutter; close-up of a broken window; night shot of street lamps; a child in silhouette at the top of some steps, etc.

Nor is it just the narrowness of the themes that is surprising, there is also little interest in people. Obviously there are frequent articles about how to take portraits or people in set pieces — in silhouette, sprawled over rocks, peering into mirrors. But in truth there are few attempts to encourage a new look at the human being as an individual or to show him or her in some activity which reveals the range of human experience.

Most magazines run a 'clinic' to which readers submit their pictures for diagnosis. Someone submitted a picture of 'Dene' (a young woman) to Roger Darkers of *35MM Photography*. What he said he looked for was a nice photograph. What? 'We get plenty of portraits but seldom do they have that little bit of "something" that helps them get selected. Generally they fall into two categories. Nicely photographed but lacking an interesting expression, and plenty of expression but not so well photographed.' Interesting in what way? To what preconceptions? Against whose mental imagery? In fact the photograph of poor 'Dene' looked like 1980s' Croydonesque, a London Provincial version of *Dynasty*.

What amateur photography magazines never touch on is what all this equipment and effort is for. Now I do not want to fall into the trap of saying that you should not bother with an activity unless there's a use for it — I'd hate to see, say, suburban gardens disappear or deny anyone the chance to lose themselves in a hobby. But amateur photography does look particularly sterile. It's got nothing to do with enlarging one's perception or understanding of the world because it stays within the conventions of its craft.

Photography is unlike painting or gardening or home-computing because the very nature of the process does not allow you to engage with making something. The actual interaction between subject and object is mechanical — the more so if the composition and processing is carried out by someone whose ambition is only to capture the look of the advertising or fashion industry. Of all the active leisure pursuits amateur photography is one of the most passive — like painting in oils but slavishly copying a picture postcard.

The gulf between the amateur and the original professional in photography is enormous and it comes down to the fact that to get anything out of the camera which can add to or broaden human experience demands perception and a willingness to stuff conventions. That is not what the trade magazines are about. □

Prince of the amateur photographers: 1985 Ilford calendar (detail)

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Christmas Island Discs

Barney Hoskyns, Charles Fox and Andrew Clements recommend some good record buys

ROCK

Bobby Womack

The Poet II
BOBBY WOMACK *Motown*

I've been subjected to more music this year than ever before, with the result I haven't had time to *listen* to much of it. Singles and stand-out tracks stick in the mind, but not many whole albums. This one gets my vote for the year's most unashamedly emotional waxing, a record pulsing with passion and power that spans the whole sphere of soul, ancient and modern, without ever losing the gospel base of the man's art, and close relatives Womack & Womack made an equally strong testament to soul's traditional values in **Love Wars** (Elektra). Favourite soul otherwise was 'Aphrodisiac' by ex-Temptation Dennis Edwards, 'Love Gone Bad' by Mavis Staples, and Bobby King's storming 'Lovequake', *plus superb live albums by the New Orleans Neville* Brothers (Demon) and earthy, 300-lb preacher Solomon Burke (Rounder).

Born in the USA
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN *CBS*

Bruce Springsteen came back with his strongest, simplest album in a few years, a rock'n'roll record about depressed rock'n'roll America whose effortless mastery made all the new blue-collar, grease-monkey rockers sound pretty futile. Other saviours of tradition included REM with **Reckoning** (IRS), though I preferred their producer Mitch Easter's group Let's Active, whose **Cypress** (IRS) was even more quirkily delightful as neo-Sixties folk power-pop. There were some fine things in Rickie Lee Jones's **The Magazine** (Warner Bros), but my favourite US pop was probably Van Halen, Cyndi Lauper and a couple of Prince songs.

In the Studio
THE SPECIAL AKA *2-Tone*

Climate of Hunter
SCOTT WALKER *Virgin*

Closer to home, these were the best records. Half of *In the Studio* was already familiar as singles, but the album was all of a piece and had a mature complexity all its own, drawing on jazz, reggae and Africa and a bunch of other musics besides to craft the most thoughtful pop work of the year. Walker's solo comeback was a chilling suite of abstractive meditations that risked pretension but haunted convincingly — ice-age Sinatra would be a reasonable analogy.

In the Wee Small Hours, Where Are You?, No One Cares and Only the Lonely
FRANK SINATRA *Capitol*

Sinatra it was, too, who proved the year's biggest revelation to this listener when Capitol issued digitally remastered versions of his classic Fifties albums. Repeated intoxication by such suave anthems to loneliness as 'Goodbye' and 'I'm a Fool to Want You' (Gordon Jenkins tune and arrangement *respectively) has won me over completely to this* cocktail-hour tragedian, love's eternal fool.

JAZZ

The Boogie Woogie Masters
Affinity AFS 1005

The name had sexual overtones long before rock music borrowed one-half of it ('I wonder who's boogieing your woogie now' went a blues line of the 1940s). Originally called 'Fast Western' because it sprang up on the Texas side of the Mississippi river and allegedly a transplanting of blues guitar techniques to the piano, boogie woogie really took on identity in Chicago during the 1920s. 'Pinetop's Boogie Woogie', recorded in December 1928, provided the genre with that name. The pianist, Clarence 'Pinetop' Smith, was killed — as an innocent bystander — in a brawl in a club the following March. Three versions of his piece are included in this anthology: Pinetop's own, full of springy optimism, obviously intended to keep dancers on the go ('When I say "Git it", everybody mess around'); one by Albert Ammons, using a small band to play riffs; and Count Basie's, not as minimalist as might be expected with that superb rhythm section floating behind him, but functional in the best sense. Two famous train blues are represented: 'Cow Cow Blues' (the title came from the cow-catcher at the front of American railway engines) which provided Cow Cow Davenport with his nickname, and — easily the outstanding boogie-woogie composition — 'Honky Tonk Train Blues', not just an excuse for rattling off exciting phrases but pursuing the metaphor of the locomotive and building a complicated, intense performance. And, just as nimbly as any of his contemporaries, Speckled Red offers — in Memphis in 1929 — a cleaned-up version of 'The Dirty Dozens' and — still with the age-old activity in mind — 'The Right String But the Wrong Yo-Yo'.

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The group's name, for a start, sounds unwieldy by presentday notions. Yet the Quintet was precisely what it claimed to be, performing to devotees at the Hot Club in Paris before approaching a record company in the autumn of 1934. 'Far too modern' was the verdict. The two rejected sides, included on this album, sound dazzlingly up-to-date, mainly because of Django Reinhardt's guitar playing. Stephane Grappelli was a man still with a name to come; Django's brother, Joseph Reinhardt, and Roger Chaput were back-up guitarists, while Louis

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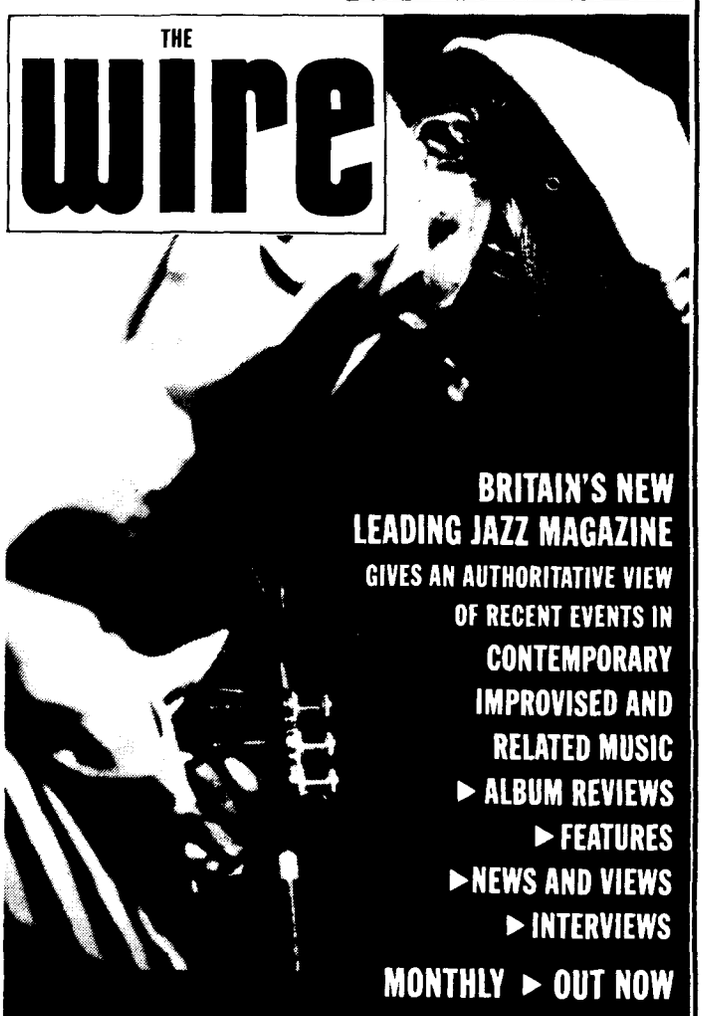

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Django Reinhardt

Vola was a busy Parisian bassist. If purists in the 1930s sniffed at the chug-along rhythm section, that was because it sounded nothing like Basie's or Ellington's. Nowadays it all seems totally in context. The tracks on the album cover a period of just over a year, taking in sessions where Reinhardt and Grappelli accompanied singers (Pierre Lord warbles 'Smoke Gets In Your Eyes' and 'Cocktails For Two' in French, Nane Cholet copes with 'Moonglow'). There are, too, collaborations with the saxophonist Alix Combelle and two Americans: trumpeter Arthur Briggs and the all-rounder Big Boy Goodie. But the bulk of the music is by the original Quintet and attests to Reinhardt's status as the first major jazz innovator to surface outside the United States. He embarks on dashing forays in 'Blue Drag', 'Chasing Shadows' and 'Dinah', while 'Tiger Rag', always something of a tear-up in those days, contains a legato solo that soars across the beat, full of melodic authority.

Coe, Oxley & Co — Nutty (on) Willisau

TONY COE

Hat ART 2004 (2 LPs)

An oddity of jazz history is how the clarinet began to be avoided by younger, modern-minded musicians when bebop replaced swing halfway through the 1940s. Perhaps the instrument had become too identified with players such as Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw. And, despite the efforts of Buddy De Franco, Jimmy Giuffre and a few others, post-swing clarinettists are still thin on the ground. One of the very best, though, is British: Tony Coe, who came to the fore with Humphrey Lyttelton's band at the end of the 1950s. Soon after, his tenor saxophone playing had Count Basie pestering him to join his orchestra. But Coe has stayed put, meanwhile expanding his scope, performing, for instance, with classical ensembles — notably The Fires of London. That experience has affected his style, more acerbic than in the days when he idolised Barney Bigard, and the effect is heightened by his fondness for using a boxwood C clarinet. This album, recorded during the Willisau Jazz Festival in 1983, presents Coe in the company of the drummer Tony Oxley, still something of an *enfant terrible* (but not on this occasion), and Chris Laurence, quite simply one of the finest bass players around. Coe's clarinet is heard in 'Some Other Autumn' and again in 'Gabriellissima', rather like a Balkan folk dance. 'Body and Soul' has him on tenor saxophone, sounding agitated and intense. Most satisfying of all, perhaps, is Coe's soprano playing in 'A Time There Was', composed by the late Robert Cornford and inspired by the opening line of *Before Life And After*, one of Hardy's greyer poems.

New York Scene

ART BLAKEY AND THE JAZZ MESSENGERS

Concord CJ-256

Jazz is notoriously hard to teach. Which is why the most practical equivalents to universities within the music have been those long-running bands in which the more talented players could hone their ideas and techniques. Woody Herman's Orchestra, for example, or Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. Blakey, one of the great drummers, has been leading bands for over 30 years. He tells composers the kind of pieces he needs, most of them balancing the aggressiveness of hard bop, the style around when the Messengers began, with gentler, modal episodes. And he constantly goads his sidemen into excelling. Blakey's ability to choose good trumpet players has always been renowned. Clifford Brown and Lee Morgan were two who worked with him; more recently he launched Wynton Marsalis on the wider jazz scene. Marsalis's successor, Terence Blanchard, comes from New Orleans too — and was indeed taught by Wynton's father, Ellis Marsalis. On this LP he toys at length with the melody of 'Tenderly' and contributes a composition, 'Oh, By The Way'. Another comparative newcomer is Donald Harrison, his alto saxophone playing occasionally suggesting affinities with the whimsicality of Paul Desmond's. Not the greatest LP ever made by the Messengers (incidentally, it was recorded at a New York club last May) but well up to standard. And it underlines why break dancers at venues such as the Camden Palace prefer to gyrate to Blakey records rather than to disco music.

Poetry

STAN GETZ & ALBERT DAILEY

Elektra Musician 960 370-1

The sound that some performers have extracted from the tenor saxophone has been as important as their phrasing and harmonic skill. Coleman Hawkins went for sumptuousness; Ben Webster carried that approach even further, the breath fairly whistling around the mouthpiece; Coltrane oscillated while hinting at generalities; Rollins is acrid but precise. Stan Getz might be said to coo — sometimes like a sucking dove (in ballads such as 'A Child Is Born' and 'Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most'), at other times more querulously, as in faster pieces like 'Night In Tunisia' and Charlie Parker's 'Confirmation'. The celebrated coolness is there, but with an edge to it. Yet it is not just Getz's mastery which makes this an exceptional LP but also that of his partner, Albert Dailey, who, when he died — aged only 46 — last summer, was hardly even a name to most *aficionados*. In fast numbers Dailey adapts Bud Powell's basic manner, jabbing chords with his left hand, spilling out lines with his right. But in his two unaccompanied solos, 'Lover Man' and 'Round Midnight', he mixes a little of Art Tatum's bravura with Bill Evans's fondness for reshaping harmonies. The outcome is an exercise in impressionism like a mezzotint of Elsinore.

CLASSICAL

Liszt: Années de Pélérinage Books 1 & 2

BOLET *Decca 410 160-1 & 410 161-1*

Mozart: Piano Sonatas in A & F

UCHIDA *Philips 412 123-1*

Jorge Bolet's continuing Liszt series is one of the most valuable and distinguished of current recording projects. He is almost the last surviving representative of a vanished race of pianists who preserved the grand manner in playing Liszt. Bolet combines the priceless asset of a razor-sharp technique with a keen musical intelligence and the ability to make even the most bravura display piece a satisfying musical whole. The first of the *Years of Pilgrimage*, subtitled 'Switzerland', is rarely recorded, perhaps because it offers interpreters less flamboyant rewards than its successors. Bolet plays the pieces exquisitely, with ravishing tone, and for the bigger, more extrovert offerings of the second, Italian book, finds a quite dazzling technical finish.

Mitsuko Uchida's Mozart series begins most auspiciously with the A major and F major sonatas, to which she adds the D minor fantasia as a richly drawn appendix. Her approach is not for the faint-hearted — there is no scaling down of emotion nor thinning of the range of tone, but she is ever alert to each nuance of the piano writing, finding plenty on which she can lavish her attention even in such a well-worn piece as the finale to the A major sonata, the *Rondo alla Turca*. Each of her subsequent six records in this survey should be speedily acquired.

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Elgar: Symphony no. 2
HAITINK *EMI EL 270147 1*
Mahler: Symphony no. 1
SOLTI *Decca 411 731-1*

Early this year EMI released Bernard Haitink's recording, with the Philharmonia, of Elgar's first symphony, as fine as any version currently available, even if it did not quite sweep the field. Its companion is better still. There is no view of the second symphony that I have heard which equals Haitink's in its breadth and symphonic cohesion, let alone in sheer refinement; textures and themes are clarified in a way one has never experienced before. Haitink has gone on from Elgar to explore other areas of British music — Walton, Britten and most recently Vaughan Williams. He demonstrated in those performances as he does on this disc that the best of these composers needs no parochial special pleading, and that a work like the second symphony can stand comparison with the finest products of European late romanticism.

The combination of Georg Solti and Mahler is a more familiar one. Solti and Decca are re-recording a symphonic cycle with the Chicago orchestra, and gaining the benefits of up-to-date technology. This first symphony is most stunningly recorded and played, and reveals the more recent, mellower Solti, who is less inclined to fast tempi and heavy accentuation, and more concerned with continuity of line and beauty of tone.

Verdi: Il Trovatore
GIULINI *Deutsche Grammophon 413 355-1 (three records)*
Verdi: Otello
BARBIROLLI *EMI EX 29 0137 3 (three records)*

Each of Carlo Maria Giulini's recordings is the subject of prolonged preparation and thought on the conductor's part. He records a work, especially an opera, only when he feels a particular affinity and understanding, which is one reason his discography remains sadly small. This *Trovatore* is conceived on a most spacious scale, with tempi which might well seem too slow in the theatre. On disc Giulini almost always justifies them, and his principal singers and chorus relish the latitude given them. The cast is not quite so uniformly excellent, but it is headed by Placido Domingo's almost perfect Manrico, heroic of timbre and manner. Rosalind Plowright's Leonora, thrilling in sound quality, is less convincing dramatically; Brigitte Fassbaender's Azucena is intermittently compelling. Altogether, though, there is not a recent version of the opera to compare with Giulini's deeply felt and conceived account.

The reissue of Barbirolli's 1969 *Otello* is a curate's egg. The principals — James McCracken, Fischer Dieskau and Gwyneth Jones — are not Italian and it sometimes shows, though all three produce moments of great dramatic intensity when the performance suddenly takes fire. Yet McCracken's Otello steers close to caricature at times; Barbirolli occasionally lets the tension slacken alarmingly. More for devotees of the conductor, perhaps, than a first recommendation for the opera.

Skryabin: Preludes
GAVRILOV *EMI EL 27 0090 1*
Debussy: Preludes
EGOROV *EX 27 0034 3 (two records)*

Andrei Gavrilov seemed to spoil his British reputation with his recent self-indulgent recital in London. This collection of Skryabin miniatures is a timely reminder of his talent when he can settle down to simple, purely musical expression. He favours the lyrical, reflective side of the composer rather than the demonic, and renders each of the preludes with a beautifully judged range of colour and touch, but with a quite astonishing control of dynamic in the rarer explosive pieces. Skryabin recordings are relatively rare; good ones like this are rarer still.

Youri Egorov is of the same generation of Soviet-trained pianists as Gavrilov, but a quieter, less bruited artist. He is capable of remarkably sensitive playing, and this complete set of the Debussy preludes, together with *Estampes* and a piece from *Images*, demonstrates his abilities. Every piece shows fresh, unhackneyed thinking, and a willingness to build up an interpretation from first principles; nothing here is secondhand. The recording, thankfully, catches the full spectrum of his inflections.

Wagner: The Flying Dutchman
VON KARAJAN *EMI EX 27 0013 3 (three records)*
Wagner: Tannhaüser
GERDES *Deutsche Grammophon 413 300-1 (three records)*

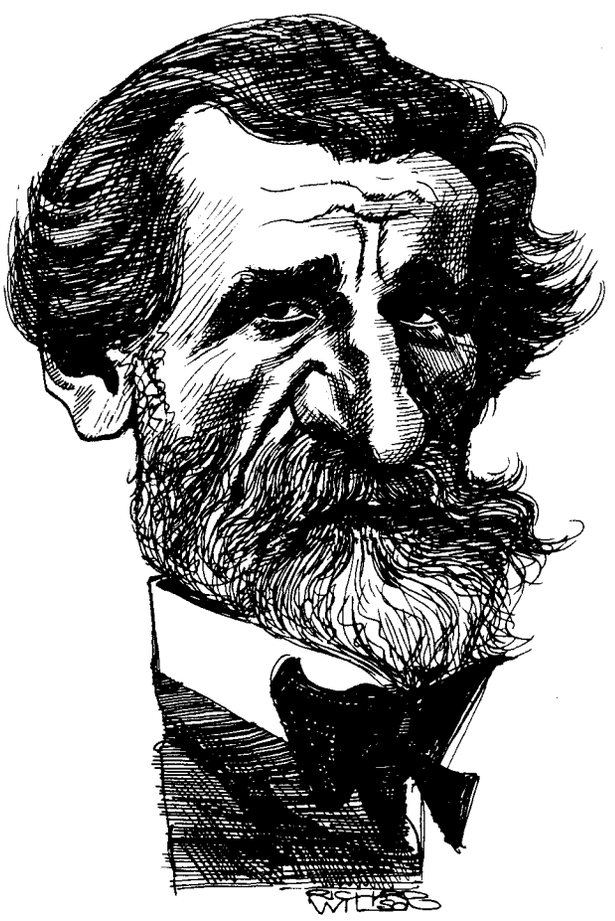
Of all the pre-*Ring* music dramas *The Flying Dutchman* has become the most popular among Wagnerians, as well as the most frequently recorded. To date, however, there has not been a version which could be recommended unreservedly for the quality of its conducting and singing. From the information given on the box Von Karajan's version was put together over several years, presumably to accommodate its principals. They are a finely matched team, headed by José van Dam's splendidly moving, magnificently voiced Dutchman and Dunja Vejzovic's Senta. But the set remains dominated by its conductor; here his latter-day fondness for slower tempi matters less than it does elsewhere in the operatic repertory, and the Berlin Philharmonic is on top form. For some, such things will make the set self-recommending, and whether the opera is presented in its one- or three-act version (Karajan opts for the latter) will not concern them.

I'm less happy about the reissue of the 1969 *Tannhaüser*; less happy about the work itself, but more particularly about the performance, which is routinely conducted and, with some exceptions, similarly sung. Those exceptions, though, are magnificent ones: Fischer-Dieskau's comprehensive Wolfram, and Wolfgang Windgassen's Tannhaüser. Versions are again important: Gerdes here conducts the Dresden one, which has the merit at least of being the shorter.

Mozart: Piano Concertos K 271 & K 413
BILSON *Archiv 410 905-1*
Mozart: Requiem
HOGWOOD *L'Oiseau-Lyre 411 712-1*

Two kinds of Mozartian authenticity. Malcolm Bilson is a tireless champion of the fortepiano for playing Mozart, and he has teamed up with the English Baroque Soloists for a complete series of the concertos played in a thoroughly 18th-century style. There are both gains and losses in such historical fidelity: the thinner sound of the old solo instrument allows the accompaniment greater clarity and prominence, and the importance of low-lying parts to come through, but the drier, less expressive sound also seems to bring performances of narrower emotional range, despite the sensitivity and civility of Bilson's playing.

The *Requiem* appears in a new edition by Richard Maunder shorn of all Sussmeyer's accretions and presenting only music known to have been written by Mozart. So we lose the familiar Sanctus, Osanna and Benedictus, and have a new continuation for the Lacrimosa, as well as cleaner, less cluttered orchestral textures throughout. I confess I still prefer my Mozart Requiem in the old, adulterated form, but there is no denying the quality of the performance of this version, conducted by Christopher Hogwood with the Academy of Ancient Music and a fine quartet of soloists.



Giuseppe Verdi

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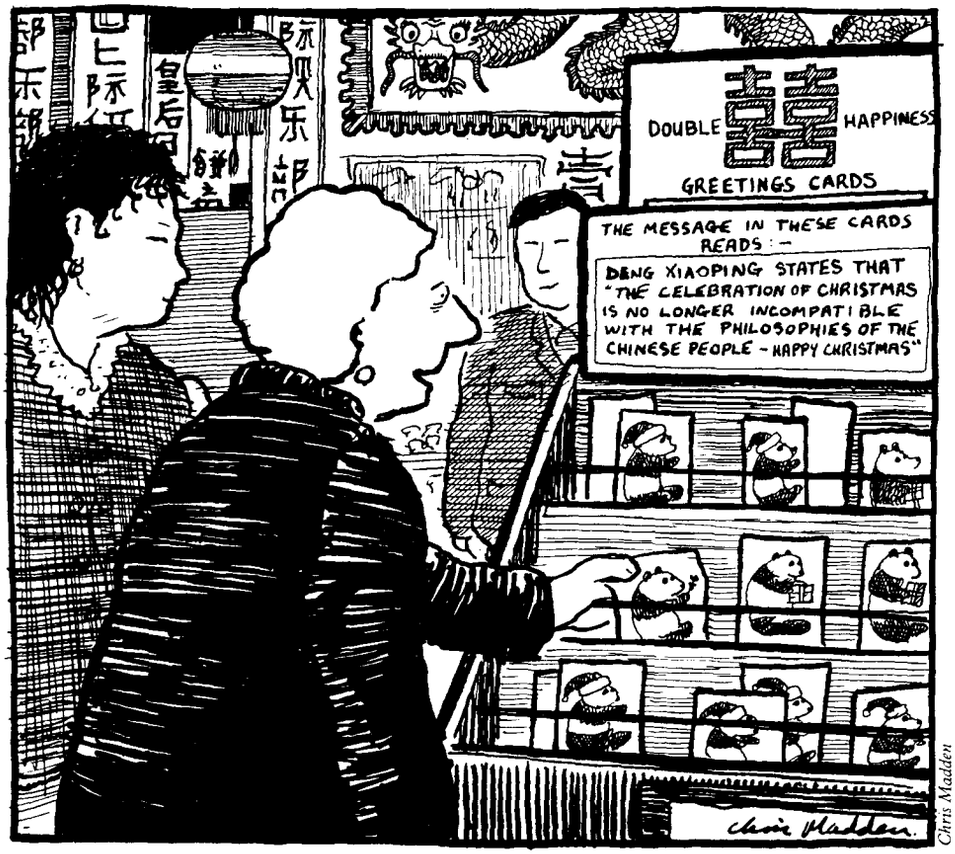
DOUBLE
HAPPINESS
GREETINGS CARDS
THE MESSAGE IN THESE CARDS READS :-
DENG XIAOPING STATES THAT "THE CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS IS NO LONGER INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE PHILOSOPHIES OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE - HAPPY CHRISTMAS"
Chris Madden

Chickening out

Nina Hibbin

CHRISTMAS at home has never been the same since Auntie Dot died. Once our daughter had outgrown the festive stocking and the fairy-lights, the three of us transferred our motivating energy to Auntie Dot, edging towards 80 and still charring for a rich inebriate.

We would stow away a year's accumulation of clutter in not-to-be-opened cupboards before she arrived, and embark on frenetic shopping-sprees and culinary contortions, tingling with anticipation for the moment when she would reward us with her most fulsome post-prandial compliment.

'Quite nice, really,' she would say.

Christmasses following Auntie Dot's death were low-key affairs. Our by-then adult daughter would snatch time off from a big-city career to catch the last possible train to the remote country cottage that had become our home.

Slumping with us in front of the telly amid the nutshells and cracker-papers, she was clearly bored out of her mind. But she was surprised when we confessed that we two ancients were also feeling blue. There and then, we all took a solemn, never-again vow. No more pressies or party hats. No more jostling for position around the yule log. In future we would have our end-of-the-year get-togethers under a warm and foreign sun.

Among our most memorable family Christmas meals since then have been goat's cheese and figs under a palm tree in the Sahara, stewed sea-slugs in a fish restaurant on one of the small, outlying Hong Kong islands and cous-cous and aubergine at a market stall in the bustling Djemaa El Fna Square in Marrekesh, with its dawn-to-dusk gatherings around ballad-singers, story-tellers, snake charmers, sooth-sayers, acrobats and jugglers.

WE STARTED in a modest way with a package tour to Tunisia. By last year we'd become sufficiently seasoned to book the cheapest air-flight we could find to Mexico City, and from there to travel hundreds of zigzag miles by long-distance buses and local mini-buses into remote mountain regions. The verve and artistry with which the drivers took the dizzy mountain bends made us want to burst into applause.

Don't imagine, though, that by putting thousands of miles between us and our home ground we leave family tensions behind. It takes several days of power struggle and a three-way bridging of gender and generation gaps before we are able to come to terms with each others' aspirations.

The arguments, in fact, start half-way through the year. Phone-bills mount as we conduct protracted long-distance negotiations about where to go. The only reason we got to Hong Kong was that by the time we'd settled vaguely on 'the Far East' there were no late December air tickets to anywhere else in that orbit.

We couldn't have managed on our Hong Kong budget without the YWCA guest house, which was simple but adequate and so inexpensive that we had enough over to go on a thoroughly enjoyable, sometimes hilarious but largely unenlightening ferry-trip to Macao ('Welcome. From Here You Can See The Nice View of China' we read on a border notice-board) and China ('On your right side, People's Bus-stop' pointed out the perky young guide.)

Our criteria for deciding on a particular destination don't always work out in practice. It's got to be somewhere warm — but we shivered in our shirtsleeves through three bitterly cold days in a picturesque mountain town near the Guatemalan border, before the sun blazed forth again.

It's got to be off the most heavily-beaten tourist track — which defeated us in the Gambia, where the price of a week's idyllic hippo-and-crocodile-spotting cruise along the river Gambia, only available as a package, was a stultifying second week beside a crowded hotel swimming-pool miles from anywhere of interest.

IT'S GOT TO get us away from the European style of festivities — but in Hong Kong the skyscrapers were aglow with winking Merry Christmasses and in the beautiful Spanish-colonial city of Oaxaca, now the centre of Zapotec culture and commerce in Mexico, public celebrations continued non-stop for more than a week.

Our Hong Kong wanderings, however, persuaded us that its Western manifestations were less than skin deep. And in Oaxaca, Catholic and Zapotec cultures were fused into an irresistible series of heady spectacles and happenings, culminating in *The Night of the Radishes*, when Indians from outlying villages brought in red-and-white tableaux, rich with character, humour and imagination, depicting scenes of tribal dances and rituals, brass band concerts and town council meetings, nativities and crucifixions, farmyard and forest fantasies — all intricately carved out of giant elongated radishes.

Our final and touchiest criterion — which often clashes with the others — is our agreement to avoid countries where an intolerable tyranny is in power (throughout one year, every time we came to a decision, the country of our choice, as if by a signal, suffered a coup d'état) or where our presence as tourists would be downright insulting to a deprived local population.

We haven't always managed it; the dilemma is unresolved. The areas that we could consider legitimate for holiday-making are shrinking fast.

We were arguing, this year, between Cuba and Algeria, until one of us got laid low with a back problem. Christmas at home, after seven years of foreign ones, has suddenly become an intriguing new option. We've broken our vow. We're talking turkey again. □

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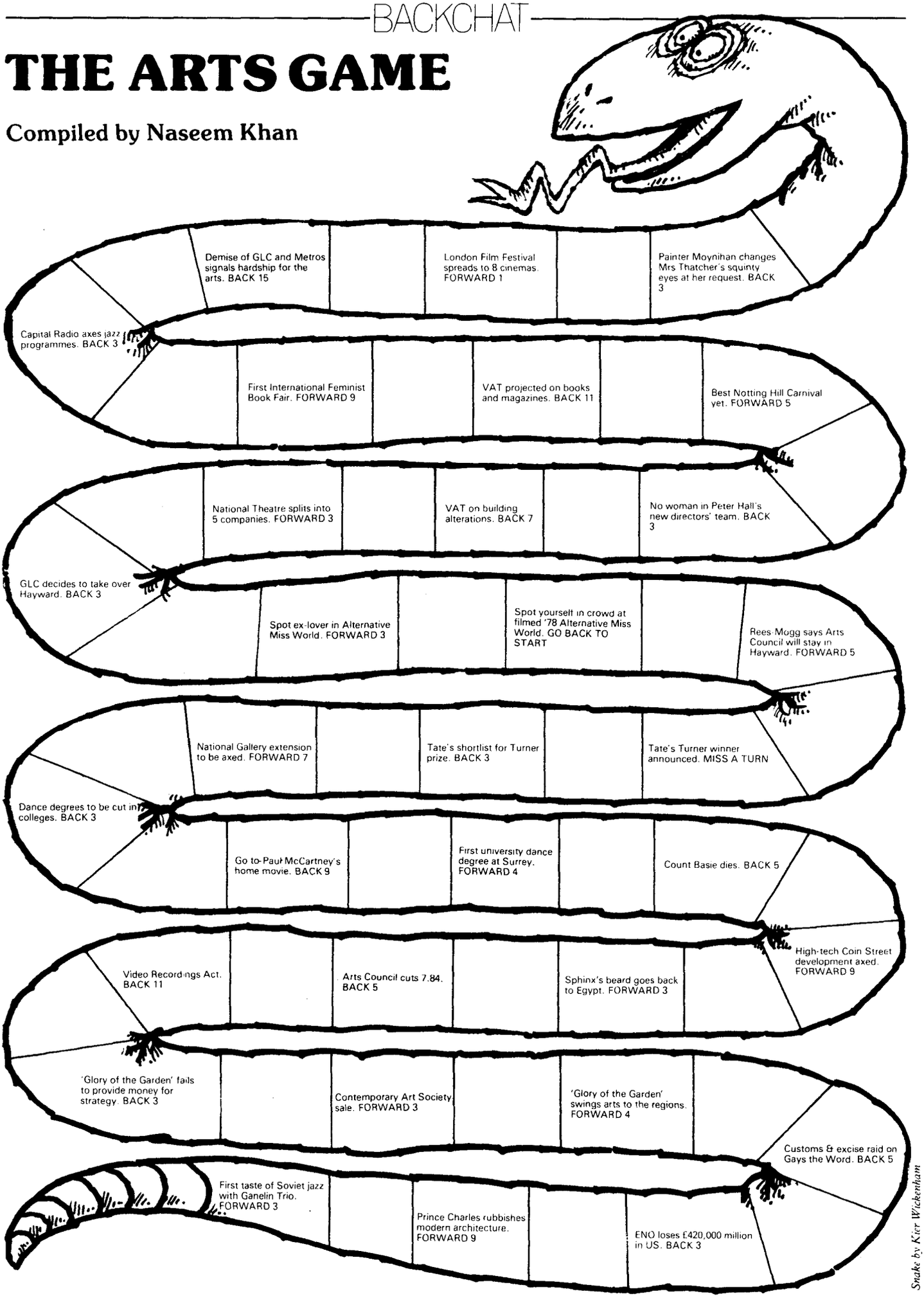
THE ARTS GAME

Compiled by Naseem Khan


Demise of GLC and Metros signals hardship for the arts. BACK 15
London Film Festival spreads to 8 cinemas. FORWARD 1
Painter Moynihan changes Mrs Thatcher's squinty eyes at her request. BACK 3
Capital Radio axes jazz programmes. BACK 3
First International Feminist Book Fair. FORWARD 9
VAT projected on books and magazines. BACK 11
Best Notting Hill Carnival yet. FORWARD 5
National Theatre splits into 5 companies. FORWARD 3
VAT on building alterations. BACK 7
No woman in Peter Hall's new directors' team. BACK 3
GLC decides to take over Hayward. BACK 3
Spot ex-lover in Alternative Miss World. FORWARD 3
Spot yourself in crowd at filmed '78 Alternative Miss World. GO BACK TO START
Rees-Mogg says Arts Council will stay in Hayward. FORWARD 5
National Gallery extension to be axed. FORWARD 7
Tate's shortlist for Turner prize. BACK 3
Tate's Turner winner announced. MISS A TURN
Dance degrees to be cut in colleges. BACK 3
Go to Paul McCartney's home movie. BACK 9
First university dance degree at Surrey. FORWARD 4
Count Basie dies. BACK 5
High-tech Coin Street development axed. FORWARD 9
Video Recordings Act. BACK 11
Arts Council cuts 7.84. BACK 5
Sphinx's beard goes back to Egypt. FORWARD 3
'Glory of the Garden' fails to provide money for strategy. BACK 3
Contemporary Art Society sale. FORWARD 3
'Glory of the Garden' swings arts to the regions. FORWARD 4
Customs & excise raid on Gays the Word. BACK 5
First taste of Soviet jazz with Ganelin Trio. FORWARD 3
Prince Charles rubbishes modern architecture. FORWARD 9
ENO loses £420,000 million in US. BACK 3

Snake by Kier Wickenham

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TELEVISION

Limp leaves

Hugo Williams

THE FILM to and for, by, with and from the British Council, **Have Culture Will Travel** (C4) started with a map of the world (Mercator's, naturally) showing culture escaping from England in the form of curving red arrows rather like the ones on those pictures of houses showing how all your precious heat has been escaping from your home without your noticing. These arrows are a hangover from the days when the Council was first set up to counter Goebbels' busy propaganda unit during the Thirties. Although, as one critic pointed out, the Council has always existed in a political vacuum because of its embarrassment at the idea of governments being involved in propaganda. This has meant its true function — 'to win friends for Britain' — has been muzzled in duff Shakespearean touring companies and dusty little up-country libraries turning round Agatha Christie mysteries for those 'staying on'. Old-style Councillor Wilfrid Hyde White in *The Third Man* was contrasted unfavourably with a modern business clone advising black people how to 'share out the glory of solving a problem' instead of looking round for someone to blame, the way British bureaucracy had previously taught them to do.

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An actress touring Japanese schools remembered the teacher's whistle curtailing overlong laughter, so that the performance proceeded in spasms: line, laughter, whistle, silence, line, laughter, whistle etc. This example of the bad old days was set against film of a director directing a director how to direct his own productions: the way ahead for the Council. A heavy commitment in Madrid was contrasted with a poor showing in Germany and rather unfairly blamed for our traditionally cool relationship with that country, compared to that of France, which gets on better with her because she spends twice as much as we do on her. A hint of pragmatism run riot here. The Council presence in America is 'tiny' because our relationship is so strong there.

Over 50 per cent of the budget is spent in the Third World and the programme plumped for Sri Lanka as a model operation of the new kind: veterinary training, statistics, heavy plant instalment, bricklaying, a New Frontier where Len Deighton must give way to Land Drainage. Dr Vere Atkinson, Council incumbent, starred in this section wearing, for several days running, an apple green shirt, a high, tightly-gathered, multi-ended green bow tie like a fistful of frilly lettuce, which made him look more like one of the crazy old-style Councillors than the cold New Men.

'It's a funny thing, but pain and suffering is a very photographic subject,' said Don McCullin on **South of Watford** (ITV) as he prowled around poverty-stricken Whitechapel, which he found 'the best subject for photography in the world'. Of late, Don's artistic eye has turned from the suffering millions in Whitechapel towards landscape and flower shots, to which he brings his customary insight into suffering and bedraggled Nature: 'Flowers start to die as soon as they are cut,' he said. 'I've gone back to look at them a week later and they look pretty frightening.' His thoughts on flowers reminded me of Francis Bacon's response to the question 'Why don't you paint a rose?' on **Arena** (BBC-2) a few weeks ago. With a couple of sentences he made the question seem idiotic: 'Within a day or two a flower's head is falling over and it is withered. It's only a question of subject matter', which McCullin would surely agree with. Morbidity and gruesomeness is not something Bacon *tries* to bring to his work. 'But with all the modern aids like photography how are you going to trap reality? If I am going to record life I have got to do it in a much more intense, curtailed way. It's the reality of the image, which, no matter how disturbed, returns you to the person. The painter has to wash the realism back on to the nervous system by re-inventing it . . .' (then, muttered, and lending immediate weight to what he had said by washing it back at the viewer) 'I'm talking a load of balls . . .'

This week's **South of Watford** was a potentially interesting film about Colin MacInnes, whose *Absolute Beginners*, bible of Paul Weller and his fans, is currently being filmed by Stones protégé Julien Temple. Temple has picked up the book's prophetic phrase 'One day they'll make musicals about the glamorous Fifties' to validate cutting the guiding first-person monologue and turning the whole thing into, yes, a jolly old musical. The programme was a scratch team of old MacInnes hands from the likes of the old Rio Café proprietor to Tony Gould, his biographer: 'He loved W10 and W11, anything that wasn't SW or his mother's kind of territory.' We learnt from the film's producers the old saw that everything associated with the Sixties actually began in the Fifties, so let's hope they don't turn this great book into another neo-swinging-London movie with that subtly wrong tang running through it like a dose of salts.

After a multitude of offices and corridors stretching way back into the ends of last summer, **The Dismissal** (C4) has finally taken place and Gough Whitlam, despite many pointed warnings from the Governor General and others, sits alone, in the Prime Minister's Residence, eating salad and humble pie for the last time. I doubt if any other country could have come up with a story containing so many ingredients of the classic political pacer: miscegenation, blackmail, cover-ups, hurricanes and then the sensation which binds it all together for TV, the unheard-of step by a Governor General of sacking an elected government in the name of Her Majesty the Queen. There is even a dollop of pommie-bashing for home consumption in the cheeky characterisation of Sir John Kerr strolling his lawns and tinkling teacups with his snobbish wife at the isolated, unreal Government House. The concluding scenes with the Governor sending for the PM while his successor, Malcolm Fraser, waits in an anti-room, having turned up early, might have been scripted by Hollywood and probably were. *The Dismissal* was no oil painting, but the whole thing had a heartfelt ring of truth about it. □

Weekend competition

No 2853 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

'There's no business like show business,' sing theatricals. We'd like songs on the joys of being an MP, an author, a Royal, unemployed, a teacher, etc. Max. 16 lines by 9 January.

No 2850 **Set by Ms de Meaner**

Bouts-Rimés, or poems using a given set of line endings.

Report **By Babe Bio**

Apserbloodyfuking brillyent! Seriously, you havnt been as sharp as this for weaks . . . munths . . . millenya. So much for wimpish old Tristan Ashman, moning that 'it' and 'bit' were 'very mean inclusions' and hoping that the others 'fared better'. Well, old cock, they sertenly did, not just manerging 'it' and 'bit' and all the other *boo* whatsits, but going on to parafrase Belloc, Tennyson, Coleridge, etc; or even (show off, George Simmers) using the words as *commencements* as well. No prizes (tuff) but a Speshal Menshon to Stanley J. Sharpless, Harriet Marks, Barbara Smoker, Peter Norman (but didn't you ever lern abowt skanning?), E.O. Parrott, John Sweetman and drunken Ruth Guthrie. (And Ruth, a lot of those 'silly names' are wot people are acsherly *called*). Ten quid each and a copy of *The Oxford Guide to Word Games* for those who got printed.

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What power to harm in each Verse Competition lies!
'Rhymed Ends' that lose you friends like swarms of French-bred flies,
the rhymes that prick and sting, whose idiotic sound
constrains your weakening brains to swivel madly round!
Far worse than deadlines, and the fixed unmoving date,
is that jejune and flat fatuity we must create,
to write so much bad verse — as many poets do,
but NOT *to order*! Rot that should be quite taboo
is almost bound to be the outcome, here, of it —
hard-core stuff that will bore you stiff, de Meaner, a biter bit!

GAVIN EWART

About him all his trade and tackle lies,
Nets, maggots, hip-flask, fancy reels and flies.
He's still, then jerks at each imagined sound,
Then still, as if with dread of turning round;
Like some poor love-sick lass spurned on a date,
Or frenzied painter poised fair to create
His master-piece, but doubting still to do
The deed, the stroke to break the last taboo.
Thus sits he on the brink and looks at it;
What is he then? The baiter or the bit?

D. E. POOLE

A motion on our Branch agenda lies.
We move it, shake it, brush away the flies,
Examine it to see that it is sound,
Amend it, try to turn the wording round:
'We call upon the Party, at some date
Or other, if so minded, to create
A Socialist Economy, to do
Away with unemployment, and taboo
All wealth and war and poverty.'
That's it!
We vote. It's passed, nem. con. We've done our bit!

GAVIN ROSS

I'm fed up with your squalid lies,
Your bristly chin, your gaping flies,
Your point of view that's none too sound,
The way you bring your cronies round,
The way you're late for every date.
Though not a person to create
A fuss, you simply will not do,
For your behaviour's quite taboo.
So kindly bugger out of it
And let me catch my breath a bit.

KATIE MALLETT

Beelzebub

Lies are the thing he does; he's good at lies,
Flies' perky monarch with the bulging flies.
Sounds cool, eh? Fogeys natch complain, 'Not sound.'
Round here we like him though. He stands his round,
Dates all the nifty girls — and keeps his date.
Creative, too. Well, we're what he'll create.
'Do it,' he whispers. 'If you want to, do.
Tabooing is the one thing that's taboo.'
It's all so modern; he just reeks of 'It'.
Bitch, though, about that 'pits-of-sulphur' bit.

GEORGE SIMMERS

On either side the river lies
A dreary waste of mud and flies
Where rusty tubs ply up the sound
To flush their bilges. Somewhere round,
A ruined tower of ancient date
Inspired some poet to create
Romantic tales of derring-do
Infused with magic and taboo:
Shallot. No battle ravaged it;
It merely crumbled, bit by bit.

NOEL PETTY

To His Coy Mistress: 1985

Before us, my new sweetheart, lies
a new year. Gracious, how time flies!
Behind us, babe, I hear the sound
of Time's great turbine whirring round!

Sweet playmate of uncertain date
what fresh delights can we create,
what joys enjoy, what deeds can do;
who fear not neighbour nor taboo,
if you are fit and fancy it?

Come! Let us scorch the Sun a bit!

RALPH ROCHESTER

Full fathom five the *Belgrano* lies;
O'er watery grave the condor flies.
Beneath the waves, with scarce a sound
The *Conqueror* circles round and round.

Two years beyond that deathly date
Politicos their myth create:
'There was nothing else that we could do':
The log book's refuge seems taboo.

'But you don't mind me seeking it?'
'Not a bit, Tam, not a bit!'

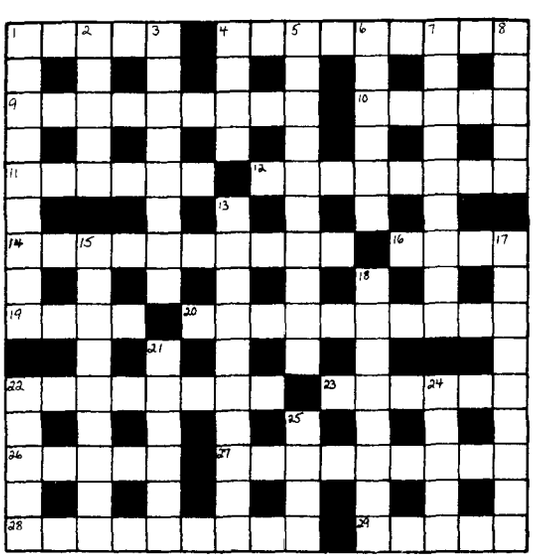
TONY PRESTON

Our Leaderene's (unless she lies)
Expecting funny puns on *flies*,
A word whose long and buzzing sound
Is thought to spread the laughter round.
That joke, alas, is out-of-date,
And it is mirthless to create
The zippy gags we used to do.
That aperture's no more taboo;
And even if it were, then it
Would have me champing at the bit.

BILL GREENWELL

Weekend Crossword 1464

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1464, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 31 December.



ACROSS

1. Contract with one to produce a beach (5)
4. Gentleman without degree gives visitor nothing (9)
9. Composer reassembles trial cast (9)
10. Like toothpaste returning for first appearance (5)
11. Rebellion in naval outfit is wrong (6)
12. Newly occupied and given another meal if not sick (8)
14. Place for a drinker without a lot of treasure (10)
16. There is rowdy behaviour when one appears in rubbish (4)
19. Time of day which gives its name to a bird (4)
20. Piece a chess champion used is in the form of a bird (10)
22. Officer from German force appearing in two articles of clothing (8)
23. The sergeant enters before there is a repetition (6)
26. Physician and general given great honour (5)
27. Get new idea about sun being in the red (9)
28. Makes enemies although they are not orderly sergeants (9)
29. Surrender the crop (5)

DOWN

1. A warhead found in the finest grass is loosely covered (9)
2. Gets close, putting one organ inside another (5)
3. Something on the stage which may make lion hate (8)
4. Musical animals (4)
5. Food given when I came first, for example, in ground unsuitable for running (6,4)
6. The boy to give his life for another (6)
7. Decorate with a decoration in what is ghastly for Londoners (9)
8. Chose some music by Elgar? (5)
13. Judging when ties are broken before marriage (10)
15. Where to get information of depression in town (9)
17. Man follows highlanders in agony (9)
18. Engage a friend in a remarkable way (8)
21. Shaking mat has caused illness (6)
22. Piffle, for example, the party sent up (5)
24. The fat go in here to be secretly made thin (5)
25. Demands an end to work (4)

SETSQUARE

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Quiz answers

Starters
a) Queen Anne; b) Democracy (in Belloc's 'On a Great Election'); c) Bloody Mary is vodka and tomato juice; Little Mary is a stomach; d) a type of herring; e) Dorothy Parker

Annual report
a) Gina Lollobrigida; b) Vanessa Redgrave; c) Anita Brookner (Booker Prize); d) Maudie Barrett, *Mirror* millionaire (Jan Hoch is Robert Maxwell); e) Sarah Tisdall was given six months in jail for leaking to the *Guardian*; f) she was given a suspended sentence of nine months for attempting to rob a bank by threatening the staff with her scent spray; g) Raquel Welch; h) Sophia Loren; i) Brigitte Bardot; j) the Queen (by Canadian newspapers); k) Gina Campbell (after practising for the water speed record); l) Margaret Thatcher; m) Nancy Reagan; n) Svetlana Alliluyeva; o) Zola Budd; p) Mary Decker on Zola Budd; q) Barbara Bush (wife of George Bush) on Geraldine Ferraro; r) Geraldine Ferraro; s) by winning the Irish Grand National

Purely fictitious
1: a) *Orlando* (Virginia Woolf); b) *The Golden Notebook* (Doris Lessing); c) *The Country Girls* (Edna O'Brien); d) *Fear of Flying* (Erica Jong); e) *Nights at the Circus* (Angela Carter); f) *My Brilliant Career* (Miles Franklin)
2: a) *Emma* (Jane Austen); b) *Cold Comfort Farm* (Stella Gibbons); c) *Wuthering Heights* (Emily Brontë); d) *Frost in May* (Antonia White); e) *Jane Eyre* (Charlotte Brontë); f) *Between The Acts* (Virginia Woolf)

Passing on
a) June Duprez; b) Diana Dors; c) Jennifer Kendal; d) Janet Gaynor; e) Ethel Merman; f) Alberta Hunter; g) Flora Solomon; h) Ursula Bloom; i) Indira Gandhi; j) Yvonne Fletcher

Meg only
a) Margaret Bourke-White; b) Margaret Thatcher; c) Margaret of Anjou; d) Lady Margaret Beaufort; e) Mad Margaret (in *Ruddigore*); f) Maggie May (in Liverpool song); g) St Margaret; h) Margaret Rutherford; i) Margaret Mead; j) Margaret Drabble

Title deeds
1: a) Elizabeth Barrett Browning; b) Sophie Tucker; c) Isabella, wife of Edward II; d) Anne Isabella, Lady Noel Byron; e) Elizabeth, daughter of James I; f) Queen Victoria; g) Jenny Lind; h) Annie Oakley

2: a) instrument of torture used during Henry VIII's reign; b) the bay-tree; c) the state of Virginia; d) Ancient Rome; e) Bank of England; f) Canada (in Kipling's *The Five Nations*); g) British flintlock musket; h) large-calibre German gun

In the nursery
a) Little Miss Muffet; b) Jack Sprat's wife; c) Curly Locks; d) Old Mother Hubbard; e) Little Bo-Peep; f) Mary (who had a little lamb); g) the fine lady on a white horse in Banbury Cross; h) Mary, Mary, quite contrary

Naming names
1: a) Margot Fonteyn; b) Margaret Thatcher; c) Barbara Castle; d) Barbara Windsor; e) Nellie Melba; f) Helen Suzman; g) Mitzi Gaynor; h) Judy Garland

2: a) Joan Crawford; b) Harriet Beecher Stowe; c) Betty Grable; d) Astrid Proll; e) Doris Lessing; f) Joyce McKinney; g) Ethel le Neve; h) Christina Rossetti; i) Agatha Christie; j) Katherine Hepburn; k) Anne Brontë; l) Charlotte Brontë

Giving voice
a) Toyah; b) Brenda Lee; c) Gloria Gaynor; d) Dusty Springfield; e) Hazel O'Connor; f) Dusty Springfield; g) Linda Lewis; h) Deniece Williams; i) Crystals; j) The Chiffons; k) Sister Sledge; l) Marianne Faithfull; m) Gladys Knight and the Pips; n) Clodagh Rodgers

Groupies
a) former Wimbledon tennis champions; b) characters in Agatha Christie novels; c) all born on 1 July; d) names given to Venus; e) former members of TUC General Council; f) all were executed; g) Roman Catholics

Treble chance
a) Mistress Page, Mistress Ford, Mistress Quickly; b) Yum-Yum, Peep-Bo, Pitti-Sing; c) Olga, Masha, Irina; d) Zsa Zsa, Magda, Eva; e) Patti, Laverne, Maxine; f) Martha, Connee, Helvetia; g) Agliaia, Thalia, Euphrosyne; h) Aello, Celeno, Ocypete; i) Clotho, Lachesis, Atropos; j) Tisiphone, Alecto, Megaera; k) Diana Ross, Mary Wilson, Florence Ballard

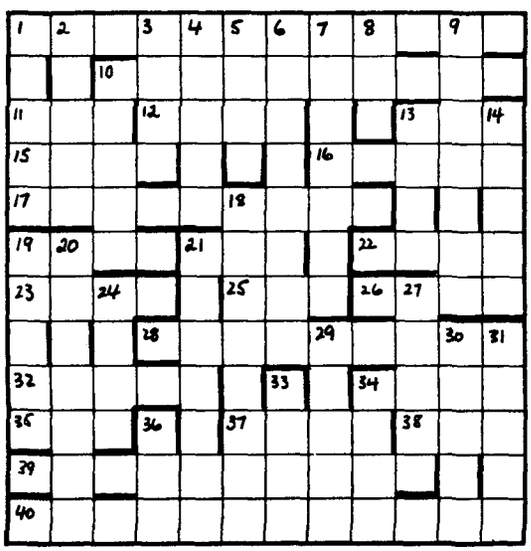
A-wooing
a) Celia (Ben Jonson); b) Myfanwy (John Betjeman); c) Celia (Adrian Mitchell); d) Anthea (Robert Herrick)

Castaways
a) Helen Mirren; b) Vanessa Redgrave; c) Angela Rippon; d) Margaret Thatcher; e) Elisabeth Schwarzkopf; f) Joan Bakewell; g) Eleanor Bron; h) Barbara Woodhouse; i) Wendy Craig; j) Penelope Keith (with acknowledgements to *Desert Island Lists* by Roy Plomley with Derek Drescher, Hutchinson £6.95).

Salamanca 89

'I – within'

PRIZES: £25 cheques for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 89, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 22 January 1985.



Twenty-eight of the answers lose one letter only (despite repeats), clued by definition and final version, and the omitted letters in clue order spell an instruction that solvers should follow not only to help them complete 1 & 40. The rest are normal and all words (including proper names) except for 8, 33 & 34 are in Chambers.

ACROSS

10 In rear be one holding up after end of tail? (11)
11 Long-hair? It's socially accepted (4)
12 Lush spots Esso's developed (5)
13 Used for washing (provided one has it) (4)
15 Skirt — do you make two turns in it? (4)
16 Trip off tongue shortly (6)
17 Requirement: meet taunt with violence (it doesn't quite show this!) (10)
19 As Large? Little compere with note breaking in? (5)
21 This Indian vessel you see's round on the inside (4)
22 Edinburgh guide taking some of these walking round (5)
23 Grill? Not exactly, but give treatment of this sort? (5)
25 Real alien needing time to contact other alien? (4)
26 Is working — watches spies? (5)
28 Draw back the blinds? Left aside these let sun thru perhaps (9)
32 Before former taste (6)
34 Young Shakespeare to take sick? (2 words, 5)
35 Sturdy respect mostly (4)
37 Here's a crab-eater, see, found in short mountain range (4)
38 A priest among the religious (3)
39 Discernment shown by statue (bust and head) (10)

DOWN

1 In it sit relaxedly perhaps? (6)
2 Natural, possibly taking no sides, this army man (6)
3 Ghastly old woman on tour (5)
4 Speed when in the wrong (5)
5 Quaint little room that's found between both sides of house? (5)
6 Unusually hard sea — then put away the telescope? (8)
7 An early Christian, can I be in Old Testament possibly? (7)
8 Ready money for a Japanese foreigner by name (4)
9 Eccentric one in sort — as Socrates — a golfer, say? (7)
10 Score instruction for all time — do note this (5)
13 What's making eye sting as though not easing? (4)
14 Harmonises those in terrible rages (6)
18 In temples out east find these arabesques (9)
19 Countless men, rioting in Africa, defy leaders (6)
20 Habitually sluggish person — (American) gangster's girl, see? (7)
21 Has centre unusually flattened (no fad)? (7)
24 Ask a third player to take part in it? (4)
27 Very smart girls in commotion once out east (6)
29 Expose swollen vein beneath tip of ulna (6)
30 This girl's somewhat well-endowed (5)
31 Upper? Take fish (6)
33 Oddly near foreign girl (4)
34 Rough slab found in Switzerland (5)
36 Where food goes that's usually masticated first of all (3)

Note: The solution and prizewinners to Salamanca 89 will be published in our 25 January 1985 issue.

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G K Chesterton

P G Wodehouse

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This Christmas we are able to offer a set of four Low sketches of literary figures — **G K Chesterton, P G Wodehouse, H G Wells** and **Arnold Bennett.**

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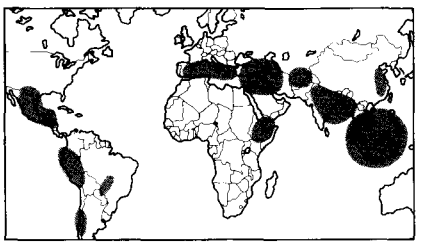
Photo: (Forest) Bruce Coleman/Brian Coates

Plants have fed the world and cured its ills since life began. Now we're destroying their principal habitat at the rate of 50 acres every minute.

We live on this planet by courtesy of the earth's green cover. Plants protect fragile soils from erosion, regulate the atmosphere, maintain water supplies for agriculture and prevent formation of deserts. Without plants man could not survive.

Yet, knowing this, we destroy a tropical rain forest three times the size of Switzerland every year – making a crisis for ourselves and an even bigger one for our children. For once the forests go, they are gone forever.

What can be done about it?
The problem seems so vast that there is a tendency to shrug and say "What can I do?" But there is an answer. There is something that each and everyone of us can do.



The Vavilov Centres. Named after the Russian scientist who identified them. These are areas rich in wild plants which are the genetic forebears of today's cultivated crops.

A practical, international plant conservation programme, prepared by the World Wildlife Fund, is now well under way all around the world, and you can become part of it. It is a plan for survival which you can help make a reality by joining the WWF.

We need your voice and financial support. So get in touch with your local WWF office for membership details, or send your contribution direct to the World Wildlife Fund at: WWF International, Membership Secretary, World Conservation Centre, 1196 Gland, Switzerland.

WWF

Save the plants that save us.

FOR WORLD CONSERVATION

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